Daily Report

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Daily Demands High-Level Statement on Neutrality

AU1602135594 Sofia DUMA in Bulgarian 11 Feb 94 p 12

[Commentary by Plamen Enchev: "How Long Will We Ignore the War in Bosnia?"]

[Text] The recent events in Sarajevo and the attitude of the international community have yet again caught Bulgaria unprepared for a proper reaction.

The situation is reminiscent of the well-known farce that happens every year, when the first snowfall takes the Sofia City Council by surprise. However, the difference is that the snow sooner or later melts, whereas the risk of war is drawing ever closer to our border.

The possibility of NATO launching air strikes in Bosnia perhaps represents the greatest threat to Bulgaria's national security in the last 50 years. It is claimed that National Intelligence Service Chief Brigo Asparukhov spoke these very words at the session of the National Security Commission the other day. It is alleged that he even admitted that President Zhelev's stance on the question of NATO attacks in Bosnia has undergone a 180-degree change.

One could read this claim in yesterday's issue of DUMA. However, the president, the prime minister, and the chairman of the National Assembly maintain an official silence. U.S., West European, and East European politicians vie with each other in making statements and giving interviews, while the omnipresent CNN turns the tragedy in Sarajevo into a live television show. In Bulgaria, there is silence, except for two statements made by the president on the Bulgarian media on Sunday evening [13 February], in which he described the Sarajevo tragedy merely as an "incident."

Zhelev found himself in a spot when he received Demirel's personal letter. It is thought that the Turkish president wanted nothing less that support for the NATO air strikes. They might at least publish this letter, to let us know what is expected of us. Alas, such a policy of openness on issues on which a consensus is well-known to exist is a practice that has been alien for our statesmen since time immemorial.

Instead of this, Ms. Yuliya Gurkovska is now concocting Dr. Zhelev's reply to his Turkish counterpart. We will probably learn the contents of this letter from the next laconic statement that emanates from the Presidential Press Center. Once again, rumors and guesses are rife. Once again, the members of parliament will wonder whether they are being sidelined when issues of national security are decided.

We have reached the point where Nikolay Slatinski, chairman of the Parliamentary National Security Commission, also had to sit down and write a letter to the president to remind him of what our position on the Bosnian conflict has been so far and to raise the alarm that a wave of militarism is developing that may engulf Bulgaria as well.

Please excuse me, gentlemen politicians and statesmen, but against the background of a possible NATO intervention close to our borders, everything else should be secondary, no matter how important it may seem. The various ballots, disputes, gang wars, cabinet shuffles, and so on are nothing in comparison with the trial to which we are subjected by the decision of a military-political bloc that some people want us to join as soon as possible, although it is far from clear whether they want us.

We should now learn a lesson from the other Europeans who are still not members of NATO and openly declare our official position, and at the highest level, instead of letting various deputy defense minister hint that limited air strikes will not directly threaten our national security. Does Defense Minister Valentin Aleksandrov think so, too?

We must put an end to the lack of coordination in our foreign policy. A good opportunity for this is presented by President Zhelev's forthcoming visit to Brussels, where he is to sign the document by which Bulgaria will join the Partnership for Peace initiative.

We hope that when in Brussels, he will express the country's unanimous view that partnership means cooperation in the name of peace, not war, and that Bulgaria will preserve its neutrality as regards what is happening on the territory of our western neighbor.

Otherwise, it may turn out that the snow has again caught us by surprise, with the difference that the prospects of the spring coming will be indefinitely postponed.

Dimitrov on 'Overt Communist Counterrevolution'

AU1702163794 Sofia Khorizont Radio Network in Bulgarian 1400 GMT 17 Feb 94

[Text] In connection with certain articles carried by today's dailies, which he described as putsch interpretations, Filip Dimitrov, chairman of the Union of Democratic Forces [SDS] National Coordinating Council, issued a declaration that was disseminated by the SDS Press Center.

The adoption of a law according to which high-ranking judiciary posts—from chairmen of Okrug Court and okrug prosecutors upward—become a unique monopoly of the former Communist Party is not a mere act of recommunization or a normal loss of the opposition in a normal parliament, but an overt communist counterrevolution.

It is true that there is still a long time until the law comes into force, thus the opinion of the leadership of the SDS parliamentary faction that there is a sufficient reason for the faction to remain in the parliament is acceptable.

On the other hand, when we declare that we will not accept this law it must be clear that we are serious.

The SDS chairman's walkout of the parliament, with the total support of the parliamentary faction, could be a clear signal of our categorical readiness to react in a sufficiently sharp manner if the law comes into effect. Until then the parliamentary faction must continue its struggle, notes Filip Dimitrov.

Such an experience does not divide our faction but rather consolidates it. It does not split the SDS but rather shows that in our movement everyone accepts his responsibilities in an organized and consistent manner in accordance with the functions with which he has been entrusted.

I hope that in any event, after the Communists' dangerous move in the parliament, the SDS will exhibit a sufficiently mature and convincing reaction, states Filip Dimitrov, chairman of the SDS National Coordinating Council.

Successes of FYROM Diplomatic Policy Noted

AU1602153294 Sofia STANDART NEWS in Bulgarian 11 Feb 94 p 8

[Albena Shkodrova article: "Temporarily in Charge of the Macedonian Drama"]

[Text] It is one of the greatest pleasures to stick out your tongue at someone who has only to reach out in order to hit you, but is absolutely not in a position to do so.

Yesterday, Macedonia [The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia—FYROM] had the opportunity of experiencing such a pleasure.

Macedonia kept its cool while the most irreconcilable opponents against its international recognition, namely the Socialists, won the elections in Greece. The Macedonians still remained calm when the Greeks withdrew from the UN negotiations about Macedonia because of the country's new name and flag.

When political circles in Athens threatened to close their country's borders with Macedonia, the ruling forces in Skopje briefly commented that this could not be serious.

When the EU member-countries, one after the other, established diplomatic relations with Macedonia, the Greek Minister of European Affairs Theodhoros Pangalos started behaving like a drunken third class actor, getting on the Western powers' nerves. On that occasion Macedonia experienced a certain satisfaction which was hardly noticeable, nevertheless.

The confession of certain Greek diplomats who admitted that the dispute with Skopje is a lost cause for Greece was also accepted without any comment on the part of Macedonia.

The official recognition of Macedonia's sovereignty by the White House was the latest confirmation of the fact that Macedonian politicians are betting on the right card.

Since the very first day of its separation from former Yugoslavia Macedonia has been conducting a consistent policy aimed at winning the good will of the United States. This applies to all Macedonian political actions starting from a courageous minority policy, such as none of the Balkan countries dares to promote (as a matter of fact, the results followed in due time, and the police just managed to prevent an Albanian separatist conspiracy) to the Macedonian government's persistent and heroic struggle which was finally crowned by the stationing of a U.S. "blue helmets" contingent in the republic.

According to some political observers, certain actions of other Balkan countries, such as Bulgaria's refusal to allow U.S. nuclear arms to be deployed on its territory, and last but not least, the stubborn behavior of Greece, are positively contributing to Macedonia's good relations with the West.

Until yesterday Washington was the last hope for Athens. Since yesterday the U.S. is the strongest shield for the protection of Macedonia's independence. There is even more—by the act of establishing diplomatic relations with Macedonia the White House assumed the role of chief actor—temporarily in charge of the Macedonian drama and reversed the positions.

Athens, which relied on its international contacts, on its traditional presence in West European affairs, and on its membership in the European international organizations, suddenly appears to be in a situation very similar to that described as international isolation.

Macedonia, whose government, until recently, used to complain about the Western countries' lack of interest and about the inconsistency of their behavior toward Macedonia, finally awaited the moment of sticking its tongue without any risk. As a matter of fact Macedonia did so yesterday by proposing to resume negotiations with Athens, with a somewhat offensive magnanimity.

Zhelev Receives Rakovski Officer Legion Group

AU1702164094 Sofia Khorizont Radio Network in Bulgarian 1600 GMT 17 Feb 94

[Text] On 17 February President Zhelyu Zhelev received representatives of the Rakovski Bulgarian Officer Legion, who conveyed to him alarming details related to the financial situation of the Armed Forces. They demanded transparency and openness in reporting the budgets of the Army and the Ministry of Interior and insisted on decreasing the apparatus of the General Staff and the Ministry of Defense. The issue of restricting certain civil rights of the military in the Defense and Armed Forces Bill, which was adopted at the first reading, was addressed.

Those issues, President Zhelev said, will be placed on the agenda of the first meeting of the Consultative Council on National Security.

Zieleniec, Baudys Support NATO on Air Strikes

AU1702162794 Prague LIDOVE NOVINY in Czech 16 Feb 94 pp 1, 12

[Interview with Minister of Foreign Affairs Josef Zieleniec and Defense Minister Antonin Baudys by LIDOVE NOVINY reporters "vik, has"; place and date not given: "The Czech Minister of Foreign Affairs Is Convinced That Our Place Is by the Side of the Allies"]

[Text] Prague—The issue has been discussed for several days now as to whether President Havel's and Prime Minister Klaus's views on possible NATO air strikes in Bosnia differ. The view could also be heard that the minister of foreign affairs rather backs Vaclav Havel's statements in support of air strikes, made during the president's visit to Thailand. In this context, we asked Josef Zieleniec a few questions:

[LIDOVE NOVINY] What is your view of possible NATO air strikes in Bosnia?

[Zieleniec] First, it must be realized that the world is still at a loss about what to do about this conflict and that a solution can come only from within the former Yugoslavia, perhaps with help from international organizations. Second, however, we also have to realize that the NATO countries' ultimatum is meant, first and foremost, as some kind of relief for the citizens of Sarajevo. It is an attempt to prevent the city from being strangled.

It was very hard for the NATO states to arrive at this decision, which is not only militarily intricate but also politically risky. I believe that, at such a moment, our place is by their side. If we use the word "allies" in relation to these countries, we should be taking this term seriously in good times as well as in bad—that is, even when decisions that are painful and difficult for them are at stake.

[LIDOVE NOVINY] Prime Minister Klaus does not believe that there will be any air strikes. What is your opinion?

[Zieleniec] I have been in politics for too long to let myself be dragged into forecasting. Nevertheless, I hope they will not occur. Everything suggests that NATO issued its ultimatum with all due responsibility, and it seems that the warring parties, too, realize this. If the ultimatum is accepted as a serious warning, there need not be any air strikes, which is certainly the wish of all people who care about peace in Europe.

[LIDOVE NOVINY] Should we back the allies only with regard to the ultimatum, or should we back them also in the event of actual air strikes?

[Zieleniec] The ultimatum cannot be detached from its fulfillment, for otherwise it would be empty rhetoric and a political mistake.

Minister of Defense Antonin Baudys, too, spoke with LIDOVE NOVINY about the possibility of air strikes. He said, among other things, that the NATO Council's decision on whether to intervene in Bosnia has its pros and cons. "The NATO analysts and strategists have enough information and are sufficiently qualified to know how to decide. I believe that their decision was correct. It is true, and it is also my opinion that a solution does not lie in air raids or other acts of military intervention but only in negotiations. As the negotiations still have not produced any results, however, it was necessary to exert stronger pressure on the parties to the Bosnian conflict to sit down at the conference table with a greater measure of goodwill to seek a compromise. This is how I perceived the ultimatum and the NATO Council's agreement to the possible bombing of the Serbian artillery positions. As far as our attitude is concerned, I do not want to foist upon our representatives ulterior motives in the sense that, when we want to be in NATO, we must agree with it. NATO surely will not request our cooperation now because we are not a member."

Secret Service Chief Denies Bush Inquiry Report

AU1702175994 Prague MLADA FRONTA DNES in Czech 16 Feb 94 p 2

[Article by Jaroslav Kmenta: "U.S. Investigator Is Yet To Come to Prague"]

[Text] Prague—The independent U.S. investigator who is to verify whether, within the framework of the [1992 U.S.] presidential campaign, the Bush administration really tried illegally to obtain compromising information about Bill Clinton has not arrived in Prague yet. This has been confirmed by a Czech diplomatic source who did not wish to be named for fear of difficulties at his place of work.

The claim by the U.S. daily THE WASHINGTON POST that the investigator had already visited Prague has also been denied by Stanislav Devaty, director of the secret service. Devaty said yesterday that he was not aware of any such person having been to the Czech Republic.

The Czech diplomatic source said yesterday that the investigator was attorney-at-law Joseph diGenova, who had been given this assignment by the U.S. Department of Justice. He thus set right yesterday's erroneous information about the investigator's name being Josephine Di Genova.

The U.S. lawyer is to find out in Prague details about whether the campaign team of former President George Bush had requested from the Czech intelligence service information about Bush's rival candidate, Bill Clinton. This information, aimed at discrediting Bush's opponent in the elections, concerned the 1970's, when Clinton, as an Oxford University student, had spent a few days in Prague with the family of [widow of Jan Sverma, one of the founders of the Czech Communist Party] Marie Svermova.

The WASHINGTON POST wrote that the independent investigator was examining a possible breach of law in the search for compromising information in passport forms filed by Bill Clinton in the past. In connection with the search for this data, in the fall of 1992, Elisabeth Tamposi was forced to resign as assistant secretary of state.

Kovac Views First Year of Presidency

AU1502094794 Bratislava PRAVDA in Slovak 11 Feb 94 pp 1, 5

[Interview with President Michal Kovac by Marian Lesko; place and date not given: "The President Has the Right and, Hence, Also the Duty; With Michal Kovac One Year After His Election"]

[Text] In mid-February of last year, deputies to the National Council elected Michal Kovac president of the Slovak Republic. In addition to discharging the duties of head of state, in this one year he has been forced to do something extra: to establish the tradition of executing this highly important institution. Our interview concerns not only the past, but also the present and the future—that is, that which the first citizen of the Republic has in common with the rest of us.

[Lesko] Mr. President, it transpires from many articles, speeches, and statements that, first and foremost, everyone expects nonpartisanship from the head of state. It is easy to call for nonpartisanship, but more difficult to live up to it in our complicated Slovak conditions. Is it possible to be nonpartisan in the first place? What is the basic criterion of nonpartisanship, in your opinion?

[Kovac] I believe that it is possible to adhere to nonpartisanship. Certainly, there are objective criteria [of nonpartisanship], but also a subjective feeling. As for the objective criteria, it would be complicated to define them, but I think that one of them is that a representative of the state who had emerged from some movement or party should not follow the policy of that movement or party. I meet this requirement formally by having suspended my membership of the Movement for a Democratic Slovakia [HZDS] and by not participating in any of its political deliberations. The contents and the substantive aspect of nonpartisanship are given by the circumstance that, when assuming positions on political issues, I do not proceed from the resolutions of the movement. Even from the subjective point of view, I am trying to be above parties' positions and interests. My inner feeling tells me that I am nonpartisan. This does not mean, however, that critics cannot find some examples, on the basis of which they could voice the criticism, perhaps even justifiably, that partisanship had been evident in this or that statement I had made. But I am not aware of anything of that sort and have never consciously violated the principle of nonpartisanship.

[Lesko] It is as though the head of state were between two millstones. On the one hand, the public expects him to "intervene" in politics and, on the other, the political parties jealously guard this territory. How do you try to achieve balance here?

[Kovac] I am trying to act in the spirit of my constitutional oath. In his oath, the president swears that he will "attend to the well-being of the Slovak nation, minorities, and ethnic groups"—that is, to the well-being of citizens. If I am to attend to this, I must assume a stand on economic policy, the foreign policy line, internal security policy, educational policy, cultural policy, and the like. [In his oath] The president also pledges to discharge his duties in the interest of citizens. All parties, opposition and government parties alike, claim to act in the interest of citizens. Yet the president is able to assess when this is actually the case and when party or group interests are in the foreground of their activity. In such a case, it is my duty to point out that something runs counter to the interests of citizens, irrespective of whether this concerns the opposition or the government coalition. Naturally, they can criticize that and seek some hidden intentions in it. Nevertheless, it cannot be denied that the president's duty is to effectively defend the citizen's interest by his critical attitudes. The president also pledges to uphold and defend the Constitution and other laws. That, too, can and actually does generate problems because the decision on what is and what is not in conformity with the law and the Constitution rests ultimately with the Constitutional Court. Yet the president has the right and, hence, the duty to assume a clear position or to ask for the Constitutional Court's opinion, when he becomes convinced that something unconstitutional is happening.

[Lesko] When the subject of the president's nonpartisanship is broached, your closest collaborators are often mentioned. The composition of your chancellery is still a hot political issue. How do you assess the staffing of your chancellery and its performance after one year in office?

[Kovac] So far, critics have not convinced me that it is necessary to change anything as far as the composition of the chancellery is concerned, particularly when I consider the points of view from which they criticize me. For example, in his interview with the prime minister, [REPUBLIKA Chief Editor] Mr. Smolec voices the assumption that "the cause of the conflict between the Castle [seat of the president] and Freedom Square [seat of the government] are people surrounding the president." He says that it is strange when the man in charge of security policy at the Castle is a Christian Democratic Movement [KDH] politician who had voted against Slovak independence in the former Federal Assembly.... As is to be seen, I am being criticized because of some specific people. I would like to say, first and foremost, that the president himself bears responsibility for the activity of the institution of the head of state. This responsibility is not borne by any adviser because he makes no decisions. Decisions and, hence, policy are made by the president within the scope of his constitutional duties. All of the others are his advisers and collaborators.

During my inauguration, I declared that all citizens are equal in my perception, regardless of whether they wanted state sovereignty, wanted the federation to continue, or sought some other political solution. We are equal regardless of political affiliation and religious belief. I pledged to work in society in favor of this equality of citizens, and I am fulfilling this pledge. On the other hand, I am convinced that I have not hired

anyone in the presidential office who would not identify with the state sovereignty of the Slovak Republic, who would not demonstrate his will and readiness to serve the Slovak state and enhance state sovereignty, who would not want to help the president successfully meet his constitutional duties. The president himself is in the best position to judge whether the employees of the presidential office are the right people for their jobs. I have convinced myself that I have reliable collaborators. They all are also fully aware that they would have to quit within 24 hours if it turned out that any one of them was fulfilling assignments for some party and working against Slovakia's interests and Slovak statehood. I have given my trust to everyone who works here, and, as long as they do not breach my trust, do not demonstrate professional inadequacy, or do not commit moral transgressions, I have no reason to replace anyone just because someone does not like him.

[Lesko] As for performance...

[Kovac] As for general performance, I believe that we have accomplished enough in this one year. It is necessary to realize that, upon my election as president, I did not have a single collaborator and that we were starting from scratch. Even with regard to the premises where we work, the beginnings were very modest, and we were forced to look for makeshift arrangements, which last to this day. Even under these makeshift conditions, we managed to secure the fulfillment of all of the presidential duties in relation to abroad as well as in domestic policy. When I positively assess the work of the presidential office, it does not mean that I am satisfied with everything. I have devoted a lot of time to a critical analysis of our own activity, which has already been completed. We have done a great deal to raise the professional standard of our work, and our efforts in this direction are far from over. Exacting evaluations of the performance of individual sections and departments are under way, and we shall resort to replacements where necessary.

[Lesko] Mr. President, not only by virtue of your office but also according to the number of your foreign trips, you have become the first ambassador of the country. Could you tell us in concentrated form what experience you have accumulated in this one year as "first ambassador"?

[Kovac] The main experience is that the neighboring countries, and also the more remote countries, view the new state and its representatives highly critically. They are guided by the endeavor that the new states become internally stabilized as soon as possible and that they become integrated into the international community and become a stable and stabilizing element within it. This is a finding from all of my meetings thus far. The second finding is that they do not approach us with any prejudice, as we sometimes have a tendency to assume. It is not true that we are being condemned in advance because we allowed the partition of the former federation. Quite the contrary, I have discovered that the manner in which this partition was carried out has earned us a certain credit. Another finding, which we must acknowledge even though it is very unpleasant even for myself, is that a certain doubt and a certain distrust of us are making themselves felt, the causes of which lie primarily in the manner of implementation of our policy, in its being insufficiently cultivated. Even today I have on my desk the minutes from the talks of one of our ministers, in which it is written that a certain U.S. ambassador, when evaluating individual countries' prospects for joining NATO, described Slovakia as a state with a lower level of political culture. This criticism is addressed to us—that is, to politicians, including myself but also others because it is owing to the state of our politics that the world evaluates us worse [than other postcommunist countries]. We must admit to ourselves that, in this respect, we have not succeeded in creating such an image as our citizens deserve because there are differences between the citizens of the Slovak Republic on one hand and the citizens of Hungary, Poland, or the Czech Republic on the other, from the viewpoint of attitude toward and respect for democracy, freedom, and other values. If the world does not perceive that in this way, it is our own fault. I am afraid that not everyone is ready to duly realize this. It is as though they preferred to keep their heads buried in the sand and only secretly wished or hoped that the world would gradually have to change its opinion about us. It will not be all that easy, however, if we do not contribute our share to this.

[Lesko] Mr. President, let me follow up on your observation about the lower standard of political culture. In your New Year's address, you said that Slovakia needed a government based on a broader coalition [than the present coalition government], which has provoked numerous reactions, not all of them positive. The prime minister said recently that he considers you an intelligent gentleman, alas, one who has forgotten who won the elections. Could you say now, after a lapse of time, what was in the background of your idea and what made you go public with it?

[Kovac] Let me first return to the view that I have forgotten who won the elections. I have not forgotten. Otherwise, I would not have emphasized that, even when there is talk of a broader coalition, such a coalition is impossible without the HZDS. A broader coalition does not mean in the least that the election results are being changed. It only means that the HZDS will take on yet another partner or partners for the government to be able to rely on sufficient support in parliament. I repeat once again: I have never spoken in favor of a government without the HZDS. Let me now move to the question of what made me come up with the idea of a broader coalition. It was the fact that, for many months, a certain measure of domestic political instability has persisted in our country, which finds its expression also in the fact that some laws pass in parliament with difficulty. As a result, stalemate situations come about, as was the case only recently, although they could have been predicted. I had all of this in mind when drafting the New Year's

address. In it I wanted to suggest possible ways of overcoming instability. I believe that the events in parliament at the close of last week confirm that I did not err. Another matter is that this need not be to the liking of some HZDS members. Yet the needs of Slovakia dictate something else. If a broader government coalition is not formed now, it will obviously be formed after the elections because it is becoming apparent that, after the elections, an even greater number of political parties will be represented in parliament, which will make a broad, or broader, coalition inevitable.

[Lesko] I would like to ask, also in connection with the present situation: How do you assess the constitutional powers of the president, particularly the fact that he does not have the right to dissolve parliament in a situation that the legislative corps is evidently unable to cope with?

[Kovac] In my opinion, the constitutional powers of the president are not quite adequate. A problem does indeed arise in one question—that of dissolving parliament and calling early elections. It is becoming apparent that, if the president does not have this power, the other solutions envisaged in our Constitution are clumsy and associated with high financial demands. Apparently, introducing this power of the president ought to be considered in the future.

[Lesko] We know that the stalemate situation in the National Council came about against the background of the amendment to the Law on Large-Scale Privatization, a matter to which you had devoted yourself some time ago. The executive branch did not accept your model. What were the circumstances of this rejection?

[Kovac] It is true that at the beginning of my presidency I had the idea that, as an economist, I could aid the government in some matters. I assumed that this could apply also to the matter of a new concept of privatization. Therefore, I organized a meeting with leading officials and ministers—even the prime minister was present—with the result that employees of the presidential office, experts from the Economic Policy department, had compiled a certain concept [of large-scale privatization], which, in many points, is identical to the ideas of the Party of the Democratic Left [SDL]. It needs to be said that the SDL was not yet working on its own concept at that time. It is only in hindsight that we discover that my ideas and those of the SDL have many points in common. As a financial expert, I realized that privatization proceeds should aid the recovery of state and company finances. This was the main reason I looked for a solution. Subsequently it turned out, however, that I have rather complicated the situation because the prime minister did not accept my well-intended initiative. He rather queried why the president was meddling in this. Therefore, I had the results of our project published in HOSPODARSKE NOVINY to enable those who are working either on the government draft or on the SDL draft to make use of its ideas. I have not been involved in this process since then and have also given up some other plans to avoid unnecessary tension between myself and the prime minister. Even though I believe that well-intended efforts need not generate tension, the situation showed that, unfortunately, they do.

[Lesko] We have now actually arrived at a broader issue: the place of the president's initiatives in the country's political life. Let us consider, for example, your initiative to organize roundtable meetings of ethnic minorities. There are political parties that criticize even this initiative. You have retreated from the economic sphere to avoid tension between yourself and the prime minister. What will be the fate of your other initiatives?

[Kovac] There are initiatives, such as, for example, my entry into a dialogue with representatives of ethnic minorities, that I do not intend to drop until some lasting mechanism is established securing a businesslike dialogue between the government and representatives of ethnic minorities. I have become convinced abroad that statesmen welcome the fact that the president of Slovakia had entered into a dialogue with the minorities, has been organizing roundtable meetings, and is trying to conduct a discussion. In my opinion, this institution [of roundtable meetings] has a positive impact in that it changes the atmosphere; this change of atmosphere is inevitable if the problems of ethnic minorities are to be resolved to the satisfaction of both sides. I therefore intend to continue the roundtable meetings this year, until we reach consensus on whether it is necessary to adopt a legal norm on the position of minorities in the form of a constitutional law or a law that would comprise everything regarding the legal position of ethnic minorities. This dialogue must be conducted until other components of an overall solution to the minorities issue are in place—the concept of this solution, a program of practical measures, and the establishment of a government commissioner or some other institution that would be permanently in charge of the affairs of ethnic minorities. As soon as all of this is established and begins to operate, it will be possible to drop the president's initiative, which does not mean, however, that there will not be any new initiatives, precisely from the position of my oath. I do not think that this depends on my will alone. I perceive even these initiatives as my duty. Our Constitution assumes an active president and not just a figurehead. I am aware of my responsibility, as the first person holding this post, for the idea of the institution of the president that will be formed. This is a responsibility not only toward the present generation but also toward future generations.

[Lesko] As our interview is taking place shortly before the first anniversary of your election, allow me one personal question with which to conclude. Had citizen Michal Kovac known one year ago what President Michal Kovac knows today, would he have accepted the candidacy for the presidency?

[Kovac] Well, to be honest, had I known that this post entails such huge responsibility, which is not to say that

I dodge responsibility, I would have had to think very, very hard. It is good to be president of a country at a time when its politicians do not squabble too much, when they trust and respect one another, when the endeavor is evident to seek mutual understanding, to unite citizens, to seek allies, and to beware of confrontation—simply, when there is an endeavor to cooperate. In that case, even the results are good, and the president can look everyone straight in the eye—citizens, politicians, and the statesmen of other countries. In our situation, however, the president must spend too much energy, too many resources, and too much effort to be able to fulfill his basic mission—to defend the interests of Slovakia, to defend its policy, to defend the interests of citizens. Those are unpleasant feelings when you want to become engaged in the right cause and arouse optimism and faith that the situation will change and some things will improve, yet have to ask yourself whether something will really change and when. I would not want to be seen by the people as someone who promises something without even knowing whether it can be delivered. And, which is the worst thing of all, sometimes I have the feeling that wrath, malice, and things done just to spite someone manifest themselves too often among us. Those are things that make me feel very depressed. I do not mind criticism because I can feel whether one seeks improvement by means of it and whether the criticism is for the good of the cause and the person who is its target, aimed at ridding him of the illusion that what he is doing is perfect. Such criticism is perfectly in order. But when I feel malice and schadenfreude in criticism, it does not give me extra strength. If we only managed to give more encouragement to good causes! We all need encouragement. All of us, even the president.

Third Installment of Moravcik Policy Report

AU1402180294 Bratislava SLOVENSKY DENNIK in Slovak 5 Feb 94 p 5

[Third installment of Foreign Minister Josef Moravcik's report to parliament on 2 February: "Slovakia in the World"]

[Text]

1.4 Relations Between the Slovak Republic and Specialized Agencies of the United Nations and Other International Agencies

By signing the UNESCO Constitution and submitting the document on joining this organization to the British Foreign Ministry in London, the Slovak Republic became a member of UNESCO (UN Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization) on 9 February 1993.

Just before joining UNESCO, it was necessary to ensure the Slovak Republic's interests in the Czechoslovak Commission for Cooperation with UNESCO, particularly the successorship of the Slovak and the Czech Republic in the UNESCO intergovernmental committees and councils, and the division of the Commission's funds. Over the first half of 1993, the Slovak UNESCO Commission was being constituted.

Three localities in Slovakia (the Spissky Castle and surroundings, Vlkolinec, and Banska Stavnica) were put on the UNESCO World Heritage List, and this can be considered to be an important success for the Slovak Republic in 1993. At a UNESCO General Conference, three draft resolutions by the Slovak Republic regarding the projects Schola Ludos, Art Film Festival, and INSITA were discussed and approved. UNESCO financial funds will be allocated for implementing these projects.

At a meeting of the UNDP (UN Development Program) Steering Committee from 16 to 19 February 1993, the Slovak Republic obtained the admission statute and was elected as a member of the UNDP Steering Council after the CSFR. Slovak Foreign Minister J. Moravcik visited the UNDP on 4 October 1993, where he was received by Associate Administrator Luis Maria Gomez. On this occasion, additional opportunities for cooperation between the Slovak Republic and the UNDP were discussed.

In October 1993, the "Country Program for the Slovak Republic" was presented in the UNDP, which will cover the remaining part of the UNDP's 5th program cycle—that is, the years 1994-96. On 18 November 1993, the "Standard Basic Agreement" (a basic agreement between the Slovak Republic and the UNDP) was signed in New York. Within the framework of UNDP assistance, the Slovak Republic has obtained the admission statute.

Since the beginning of 1993, five projects for the Slovak Republic have been approved in the UNDP. These projects are financed from IPF (Indicative Planning Figures) financial funds. The Slovak Republic also joined three regional programs.

—The Turnaround Management Program (TAM Program). This program was worked out by the UNDP in cooperation with the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD). The program helps create profitable and independent private enterprises by training highly skilled management. They also help establish contacts between the enterprise and prospective foreign customers, suppliers, and investors.

—The Intermodal Transportation Information System, the objective of which is to help countries of Central and East Europe to acquire permanent ability to process and use information from transportation. To achieve this goal, a Transportation Information System for various modes of transportation (Intermodal Transportation Information System—ITIS) will be established in each of the participating countries.

—Applied Statistical Computing for Countries in Transition, the objective of which is to establish regional

training centers oriented toward three issues: national accounts, registers of entrepreneurs, and economic surveys.

Within tne framework of its UN membership, the Slovak Republic has become a member of the UNEP (UN Environment Program), the objective of which is to coordinate and stimulate activities aimed at limiting further pollution of the environment on a global scale. The Slovak Republic supports the UNEP priorities, which are, for example, protecting the ozone layer, putting a stop to global warming, protecting land resources, biological diversity, and human settlements, and managing toxic and dangerous waste.

On 20 January 1993, the Slovak Republic joined UNIDO (UN Industrial Development Organization) by signing a document on joining, and submitting it directly to the UN secretary general.

At an extraordinary meeting of the UNIDO General Conference, the Slovak Republic was elected a member of the Industrial Development Board (IDB) because a free position was left by the CSFR.

On 27 April 1993, the Slovak foreign minister visited UNIDO in Vienna, where he discussed with the director general prospects for the development of mutual relations and cooperation.

On 19 January 1993, by the Slovak Republic's admittance to the United Nations (UN) in New York, we have become a full-fledged member of the most important regional commission of the UN Economic and Social Council.

EEC of the UN

Cooperation with the Slovak Republic (as with Slovakia when part of the CSFR) has always been intensive and is based on direct contact at the highest level, as well as on the interest of individual Slovak entities in solving, jointly with the EEC, a wide scale of various specific problems.

Between 20 and 22 June 1993, EEC Executive Secretary G. Hinteregger visited Bratislava. During his visit, Hinteregger met with the Slovak Republic's president, deputy prime minister, ministers, and supreme officials from applicable ministries.

The Slovak Republic was admitted to the FAO (UN Food and Agricultural Organization) at the 27th FAO General Conference in Rome on 8 November 1993.

On 22 November 1993, the Slovak Republic was elected FAO Council member, which helped improve the Slovak Republic's authority and prestige. This fact is considered to be an important success for Slovak diplomacy.

The membership of the Slovak Republic in the ILO (International Labor Organization) was confirmed on 22 January 1993. The Slovak Ministry of Labor, Social Affairs, and Family is the expert coordinating body.

The 80th International Labor Conference, held in Geneva between 2 and 22 June 1993, was a great opportunity to push for Slovak Republic goals and objectives within the ILO framework. Because the Slovak delegation was participating for the first time in the supreme ILO steering body, the members of the delegation supported in their speeches the basic goals and principles contained in the ILO Constitution, its agreements, and recommendations. They expressed the intention to cooperate with the ILO and purposefully use this cooperation in the process of the economic and social transformation of the Slovak Republic. The government acceded in June to respect 57 ILO agreements ratified by the former CSFR on 31 December 1992. In harmony with the time schedule for cooperation (1993-96) between the Slovak Republic and the ILO, the Slovak Government will accede to 11 additional agreements.

In cooperation with the Ministry of Labor, Social Affairs, and Family, preparations are under way for the International Year of the Family in 1994. The establishment of the International Center for the Study of Family Affairs in Bratislava was in line with the activities directed toward the preparations of the International Year of the Family. Having established the center, Bratislava has acquired the leading role in international cooperation regarding family studies from social viewpoints.

On 4 February 1993, the Slovak Republic became the 183d WHO (World Health Organization) member by the accord made at the WHO's 46th meeting in Geneva.

At the 43d meeting of the WHO Regional Committee for Europe in September in Athens, the Slovak Republic acquired membership in the Managerial Advisory Committee (MAC) and the Drug Action Program (DAP) for a period of three years, beginning 1 January 1994.

At the same meeting, a new body was elected: the Standing Committee of the WHO Regional Committee for Europe (SCRC), where the Slovak Republic gained one seat.

Through the Slovak Republic Foreign Ministry, the Slovak Republic Government made a declaration on 30 December 1992 that, as of 1 January 1993, on its own territory, Slovakia would continue applying international multilateral treaties administered by WIPO [World Intellectual Property Organization]/OMPI [expansion unknown] (a world organization dealing with intellectual property). By this declaration, the Slovak Republic's international successorship in international multilateral treaties regarding personal ownership rights and ownership rights linked thereto was established.

On the invitation of the Slovak Government, the WIPO director general visited Slovakia in August. During his visit, he met with representatives of the state administration, and he was more specific about assistance to Slovakia in the sphere of intellectual property.

In September, a meeting of the WIPO steering bodies was held in Geneva. The Slovak delegation provided information about the current situation in the sphere of the protection of intellectual property in our country. At this meeting, the Slovak Republic was elected to the chair of the Locarno Union (this union registers industrial prototypes), which can be considered as recognition to Slovakia for its activity in this sphere during the short period after the establishment of the independent state.

Since 23 February 1993, when the Slovak Republic became a member of ITU (International Telecommunications Union), Slovak Republic officials, particularly those from the coordinating body—that is, the Slovak Ministry of Transportation, Communications, and Public Works, and from Slovak Telecommunications, which has a monopoly in providing telecommunications services on the Slovak Republic's territory—gradually became engaged in cooperation with ITU.

On an ITU initiative, a UNDP project, "Assistance in Economic Management and Development of Human Resources in Telecommunications," was drafted in close cooperation between the Slovak Republic's Foreign Ministry and the Ministry of Transportation, Communications, and Public Works. The project was approved in November 1993.

A Slovak Republic delegation participated in a World Radio Communication Conference in Geneva between 15 and 19 November 1993, a conference that every two years, deals with the problem of frequency-band allocation to individual entities active in the telecommunications services, among other things.

The full membership of the Slovak Republic in the Danube Commission (DK) was achieved at the first plenary meeting of the 51st Assembly of the Danube Commission. The delegation leaders of DK member countries unanimously adopted a declaration by which the Slovak Republic was recognized, as of 1 January 1993, as the legal successor after the former CSFR as regards the Treaty on the Navigation Regime on the Danube, and was also accepted as a member of the Danube Commission.

At the suggestion of the Slovak delegation, within the framework of the working group for legal issues, a resolution was adopted condemning the fact that fees were being collected by Yugoslav organs for transit of ships through the Yugoslav portion of the Danube, by which the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro) is unilaterally violating the articles of the Treaty on the Navigation Regime on the Danube.

We succeeded in that the 51st DK Assembly did not deal with the Gabcikovo dam project in any point to any important depth.

The Slovak Republic delegation actively participated at the first meeting of the preparatory committee for a diplomatic conference regarding the acceptance of a new instrument of the international law on cooperation on the Danube [sentence as published]. The delegation supported and pushed for the idea of extending the new treaty by additional aspects of Danube cooperation (political, economic, energy-related, ecological, and cultural), based on the principle of the primary responsibility of the Danube countries for cooperation on the Danube, and therefore also for drafting a new treaty.

In 1993, the Slovak Republic become a member of important financial institutions, such as the IMF (International Monetary Fund), the World Bank, and EBRD.

On 21 October 1993, the EBRD Committee of Directors approved six projects, the overall investment value of which is 231 million European Currency Units [ECU's].

The EBRD has approved 10 projects of technical assistance worth ECU2.8 million to the Slovak Republic. Six projects of technical assistance totalling ECU2.5 million are to be approved by the end of 1993.

As regards GATT (General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade), the Slovak Republic fulfilled one of the main tasks of Slovak foreign policy in 1993 by becoming a GATT contracting party on the basis of an abbreviated [admission] procedure on 15 April 1993. After becoming a GATT contracting party, the Slovak Republic clearly declared its interest in contributing to the liberalization of world trade.

The Slovak Republic has unequivocally expressed its support to the successful completion of the Uruguay Round of GATT talks. Jointly with the Visegrad Four countries, the Slovak Republic has supported this process by the memorandum of economic ministers issued at their meeting in Budapest in November. This memorandum was sent to the G7 and the European Union [EU] countries. Slovakia has fully supported the plan of GATT Secretary General Sutherland to hold an intergovernmental conference in the spring of 1994, which would codify the conclusions of the GATT Uruguay Round in a new General Agreement on Tariffs and Services and establish the International Trading Organization.

A Slovak foreign policy task with respect to IAEA (International Atomic Energy Agency) and UNSCEAR (United Nations Scientific Committee on the Effect of Atomic Radiation) was to ensure the continuity of the state-provided supervision over nuclear safety and radiation protection on the Slovak Republic's territory after the CSFR's disintegration. The goal was to obtain membership in the IAEA, UNSCEAR, and organizations supervising the fulfillment of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, which are the NSG (Nuclear Suppliers Group) and the Zangger Committee.

At the beginning of 1993, the Slovak Republic applied for membership in the IAEA, and then, on the basis of our successorship, we accepted the multilateral agreements of the former CSFR in the sphere of nuclear safety. The issue of Non-Proliferation Treaty approval

was linked to the Slovak Republic's admission into the IAEA and was concluded when we were admitted on 28 September 1993.

After the declaration of the Slovak Republic's will to respect the Directives Regarding the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Materials and the Control of the Exports of Dual Use Items, the Slovak Republic was accepted as an NSG member (30 March 1993) and a member of the Zangger Committee (27 May 1993).

At a meeting in Aruba on 29 September 1993, the Slovak Republic was admitted into INTERPOL [International Criminal Police Organization], and an independent center of this organization has been established in Bratislava.

After approval by the Slovak Republic Government and the subsequent application, the Slovak Republic has been admitted into the GEF (Global Environment Fund).

Foreign Aid and Cooperation Program

EU PHARE [Economic Reconstruction Aid for Poland and Hungary] Program

The Slovak Republic has been participating in the EU PHARE program since 1990. On 1 January 1993, the program was divided into the Slovak Republic and the Czech Republic, and Slovakia was allocated ECU86 million. The basic goal of the program is to support the reform process and structural changes, and to transform centrally controlled economies into market economies.

An indicative PHARE program was adopted for 1993, which was signed by Minister Moravcik and the EU Commission Ambassador Leopold Giunti on 15 July 1993.

Apart from "national programs," the Slovak Republic is also participating in the so-called PHARE Regional Program, for which the EU Commission allocates ECU100 million every year for all of the 11 countries participating in the program.

The PHARE national coordinator communicates directly with his partners in the Commission, or through the Representative Office of the EU Commission in Prague. In August 1993, a PHARE office was opened in Bratislava, which is a branch of the Prague EU Commission office.

Since November 1993, the PHARE program has been drafted for a longer period of four years—that is, for the period 1994-97, under the active participation of representatives from [ministerial] sectors and important organizations through the Coordinating Commission for Foreign Development Assistance and Cooperation.

In 1993, the PHARE program to support nongovernmental organizations was launched, its objective being to support the democratization process in the countries of Central and East Europe. Moreover, a program has been initiated to support the implementation of the European Treaty on Association to the EU, which also includes a project for the improvement of the parliament's work.

Foreign Cooperation Within the Framework of the EU Programs

At the summit in Copenhagen (meeting of the European Council), it was proposed to open the opportunity for EU associate countries to participate in EU cooperation programs.

At present, the Slovak Republic is participating in the TEMPUS [expansion unknown] and ACE (Action for Cooperation in Economics) programs, which are funded from the PHARE assistance program. The Slovak Republic also had the opportunity to participate in COST [Cooperation in Science and Technology] scientific and technological programs.

After the EU decision to create EU programs for associated countries—which should have been decided by the end of 1993—the Slovak [ministerial] sectors will have to rediscuss their interests to participate in these programs.

Foreign Aid Provided by the G-24 Countries

The Foreign Ministry of the Slovak Republic made efforts to coordinate foreign assistance provided to the Slovak Republic by the G-24 countries, so as to avoid duplication of assistance from different countries and to appropriately harmonize programs of bilateral and multilateral assistance. Within the framework of the Inter-Departmental Commission for Foreign Development Assistance and Cooperation, the orientation and the priority spheres of foreign assistance were determined.

The G-24 countries will provide assistance to the Slovak Republic within the framework of their assistance to the countries of Central and East Europe, without having earmarked a specific amount of assistance to Slovakia. We consider as important the fact that the Treaty on Providing Foreign Assistance by the Swiss Confederation amounting to 30 million Swiss francs and the Memorandum on Understanding with the Netherlands—involving aid amounting to 3 million Dutch guilders—have been signed. Japan committed itself to providing the Slovak Republic with 35 internships, each lasting one month, in Japan, and two departmental studies.

Programs of Cooperation With the OECD

The year 1993 was characterized by the fact that new foundations for cooperation were laid between the Slovak Republic and the OECD after the division of Czechoslovakia. We have succeeded in having coped relatively smoothly with this process. Cooperation with the OECD gradually assumed intensity over the year, and the scope of the Slovak Republic's joining the OECD activities increased. The following results were achieved:

—The SIGMA (Support for Improvement in Governance and Management in Central and Eastern Europe) program successfully continued over the year. The Interior Ministry and the Office of the Government of the Slovak Republic were the main participants. Today, this program is a solid part of the cooperation with the OECD and has been of significant benefit in restructuring the state administration. We need to continue this program. Within the framework of the SIGMA program, a professional OECD seminar on problems of control in the state administration was held in Bratislava in May 1993 under the auspices of the deputy prime minister and the Slovak National Council Committee for State Administration, Self-Administration, and Nationalities. The knowledge acquired at this seminar is being used to improve and increase the efficiency of the Slovak Republic's control system and to prepare the reform of the public administration.

—Cooperation between the Slovak Republic's Statistical Office and the OECD includes several forms of activities, principally, providing statistical data within the framework of various indicators, providing extensive collections of data for economic and industrial surveys, participating in the European Comparative Program with the objective of achieving comparability between the statistical data of the EC countries and those of the Central and East European countries, and harmonizing the work method. At present, the preparation of the economic connection [ekonomicke pripojenie] onto OECD data bases is reaching the final stage.

—Since the Slovak Republic joined in cooperation within the framework of the PIT (Partners in the Process of Transformation) program, a wide range of opportunities for cooperation has been opened. In June 1993, on the basis of a decision taken by the OECD Committee, the Slovak Republic was given the opportunity to participate directly in the PIT program as an official partner, and, after the Memorandum on Cooperation Between the Slovak Republic and the OECD was signed, the provisional character of cooperation has been terminated, and cooperation has assumed an official character. Within the framework of the PIT program, there were several missions of OECD officials to Slovakia oriented at collecting basic data for two principal projects: elaborating the Industrial Review and the Economic Survey. The standpoint on these documents was successfully presented in the OECD by the Slovak Republic's delegations involving representatives of various sectors. Said documents will be published in 1994. They represent an overall description of the development and the current state of the industry and the economy of the Slovak Republic.

All of the aforementioned activities, plus many other partial activities, could be realized only on the basis of close cooperation and active participation of all of the Slovak Republic's [ministerial] sectors. With this objective in mind, the Coordinating Committee for Cooperation between the Slovak Republic and the OECD was established in October, which includes representatives of all of the sectors. At the same time, representatives were appointed for the Liaison Committee responsible for the Slovak Republic's contacts with the OECD in key spheres.

2. Bilateral Relations

The priority task of the Slovak Republic's foreign policy in the bilateral sphere after the establishment of the independent republic was to establish normal bilateral relations and build on the contacts of the former CSFR. So far, the Slovak Republic has been recognized by 123 countries, and we have established diplomatic relations with 106 countries.

One of the main tasks in 1993 was to secure an equal attitude toward the CSFR's two successor countries and to acquire support for transferring equal rights onto both republics. The effort to eliminate the negative presentation of the Slovak Republic as a destructive element of the federal country was a no less complicated and sensitive task.

Despite the fact that the Slovak Republic was first perceived as an unstable country, that it was to blame for the division of the federation and had problems with its attitude toward ethnic minorities, we succeeded in establishing ourselves as a viable and equal entity in European policy, with the ambition to establish good and mutually advantageous cooperation with other countries of the world.

The orientation of Slovak foreign policy toward relations with the neighboring countries, developed countries in West Europe, and the United States has proved to be justified. It has been confirmed that, apart from the principal strategic orientation toward economic and security structures of West Europe, mainly our relations with the Czech Republic and Hungary, plus the Slovak Republic's membership in the Visegrad Four, are the factors that create the opinion that our Republic is capable of cooperating, which determines, to a large extent, Slovakia's integration in the structure of political relations in Europe.

We can say that the Slovak Republic's relations with all European countries (apart from Liechtenstein, which has not recognized Slovakia due to unclear property-related issues) and with the majority of other countries have been normalized from the political and, in fact, legal viewpoint, too.

Despite the indisputably positive results of Slovak foreign policy in 1993, we have not succeeded in completely dispersing the doubts of some countries about the stability and the consolidation of Slovak internal political development and, in some cases, about the prospects of the Slovak Republic's foreign policy orientation and the appropriateness and security of investments in Slovakia.

A certain number of "blank" places in the legal system, the inadequate availability of information, and an inability to react to the offers—or the interest of the foreign partners, as the case may be—play a negative role.

Ruling Party Chairman: Government 'Plundering'

LD1702182294 Prague Radiozurnal Radio Network in Czech 1100 GMT 17 Feb 94

[Excerpts] The Slovak parliament is discussing today the opposition's proposal for calling early elections this November. Martin Dorazin, our special correspondent, reports:

Like yesterday, arguments were put forward in favor or against elections to be held this November. Milan Ftacnik, for the opposition Party of the Democratic Left [SDL], said that the proposal to hold the elections in June, which had been proposed by the government and had failed in parliament, was not realistic. Deputy Ftacnik thinks that a referendum on early elections, which the pro-Meciar part of the Movement for a Democratic Slovakia [HZDS] intends to call, is equally unrealistic and useless.

Augustin Marian Huska of the HZDS called for a speedy solution to the crisis. Dusan Slobodnik, Slovak minister of culture, said that a referendum on early elections was the most democratic way of dealing with public affairs. He thinks the postponement of the elections is in the interests of those deputies who would like to remain in parliament but were not likely to stay on after the elections. He accused the media of keeping silent on the support the Slovaks living abroad expressed in the government of Prime Minister Meciar.

Ludovit Cernak, chairman of the coalition Slovak National Party, said about differences of views within the government coalition that the coalition is practically not functioning; he mentioned strange economic activities of the HZDS. Cernak described them as arrogance of ruling power. According to Cernak, the ongoing process in Slovakia cannot be called anything but plundering.

In further addresses, deputies were mutually accusing each other of machinations with privatization in Slovakia. [passage omitted]

The paper NARODNA OBRODA has pointed out that the Hungarian deputies [in the Slovak parliament] abstained yesterday from voting on the amendment to the government bill [on June elections] and, in this way, indirectly supported Vladimir Meciar. Let us recall that, to get the amendment through, the opposition needs votes not only of some of the HZDS deputies but also of deputies from the Hungarian parliamentary parties.

NARODNA OBRODA points at a strange partnership—the HZDS-SNS coalition and the deputies of the Hungarian parliamentary parties.

KDH: Meciar's 'Sick' Policy Affecting Society

LD1702210394 Bratislava Rozhlasova Stanica Slovensko Network in Slovak 1100 GMT 17 Feb 94

[Excerpts] The current internal political crisis in Slovakia was the main subject at a news briefing today by Christian Democratic Movement [KDH] officials. [passage omitted]

Our editor Bernard Hornak interviewed KDH Deputy Chairman Ivan Simko. [passage omitted]

[Begin recording] [Simko] It has become clear that the crisis of the Slovak society and, above all, the crisis of the constitutional bodies has grown more serious. I think it is possible to say now that the policy of Vladimir Meciar is sick and that the sickness is spreading throughout our entire society. Simply, what is sick should be treated. The treatment simply consists of forming such a cabinet that would be capable of calming down the situation, that would manage to gain majority support in the parliament, and that would be capable of organizing early elections reasonably soon. A broad coalition cabinet might be such a cabinet. [passage omitted]

[Hornak] Opposition parties have met several times and discussed the current political situation. At such meetings, did you also discuss a possible composition of a broad coalition cabinet? Are the representatives of the Hungarian political parties in Slovakia going to be included in such a broad coalition cabinet? [passage omitted]

[Simko] We did not consider and are not considering the direct participation of the Hungarian political parties in the Slovak Cabinet. As far as the Cabinet's tasks are concerned, we have noted several times that all opposition political parties are prepared to meet the recommendations by the Council of Europe. The fundamental task of that Cabinet would be to calm the situation in our society and, of course, to calm relations between the Hungarians who are citizens here and the Slovak majority. Officials of Slovak political parties briefed officials of Hungarian political parties in this sense.

KDH Ready To Participate in Work of Cabinet

LD1702160894 Bratislava Rozhlasova Stanica Slovensko Network in Slovak 1400 GMT 17 Feb 94

[Text] The Christian Democratic Movement [KDH] is ready to participate in the executive power of the Slovak Cabinet, which would be active in the period up to early parliamentary elections. This was announced by KDH Deputy Chairman Emil Komarik, who said that this Cabinet should be an interim one.

Speaking at a news conference, KDH Deputy Chairman Ivan Simko went on to draw attention to extraordinary privatization activities by the Slovak Cabinet. According to Simko, because of an option that is being considered regarding a vote of no confidence, the Cabinet is carrying out privatization even during the night.

Opposition Party Chairman Interviewed

LD1702205094 Prague Radiozurnal Radio Network in Czech 1700 GMT 17 Feb 94

[Interview with Peter Weiss, chairman of the Party of the Democratic Left and deputy chairman of the National Council, by correspondent Martin Dorazin in Bratislava; date not given—recorded]

[Text] [Announcer] Peter Weiss, the deputy chairman of the National Council of the Slovak Republic and the chairman of the Party of the Democratic Left [SDL], granted an interview to Martin Dorazin, our special correspondent in Bratislava, speaking about a possible solution to the current internal political crisis in Slovakia.

[Dorazin] Today, the National Council of the Slovak Republic did not pass the deputies' amendment bill on shortening the [parliamentary] term. Why did this happen?

[Weiss] I have not yet received the results of the vote, but I learned that 12 deputies of the MKDH [Hungarian Christian Democratic Movement] and of Coexistence who were present voted for this bill. This means that there were not enough HZDS [Movement for a Democratic Slovakia] deputies voting in favor of this solution. A new political situation has thus been created. The parliamentary mathematics are inexorable, and this is why it is necessary to look for a solution in a new round of political talks.

[Dorazin] What specific steps are you going to take?

[Weiss] We will hold talks with opposition political parties and will not avoid talks with the HZDS, either, provided we get such an invitation.

[Dorazin] This means that, for the time being, the issue to be discussed will not be a vote of no-confidence in the Cabinet led by Prime Minister Vladimir Meciar.

[Weiss] Since the very beginning, the SDL has said that we are not struggling for power. We want to tackle the internal political situation. At this National Council session, it became clear that without an agreement on calling early elections it was impossible to find a permanent solution to the political crisis that would not cause political conflicts.

[Dorazin] Why does the opposition actually want these elections to be in the fall rather than in June, as proposed by the HZDS?

[Weiss] First, the November proposal was a compromise between two extremes. The majority of the opposition proposed that the elections not take place until spring 1995, which seemed to us unacceptable. On the other hand, the HZDS was proposing June. We chose a solution that might be a compromise. At the same time, we wanted to achieve a decent participation of voters in communal elections because communal by-elections sometimes used to attain only 10-15 percent participation. And, if they took place simultaneously with parliamentary elections, we would save resources, and, at the same time, a large voter participation would be secured. We also realized that, if elections took place in June, we would have a permanent election campaign from February, when the decision would have been made to hold them. Parties would then concentrate, first of all, on how to succeed in elections rather than on how to govern. We therefore preferred the fall alternative to set an intermediate period for government of a wider coalition.

[Dorazin] From Christian Democratic Movement circles we have heard the following: Among the opposition parties, negotiations have already taken place about the future Slovak Government.

[Weiss] These negotiations have been taking place, but our condition would be to call early elections and pass the bill on large-scale privatization in the form agreed by negotiations between the opposition political parties.

[Dorazin] This government would also need the support of Hungarian [ethnic] deputies. Why don't you offer them Cabinet posts, too?

[Weiss] This is a very complicated question because the ethnic problem is very sensitive, and we would not like the interpretations of demands by Hungarian minority parties to become the main theme of the election campaign.

Parliament Adopts Amended Privatization Bill

LD1802103294 Bratislava Rozhlasova Stanica Slovensko Network in Slovak 1730 GMT 17 Feb 94

[Excerpts] [passage omitted] Parliament today voted on a draft amendment on the transfer of state property to other people—the so-called large-scale privatization law. Because the debate on this amendment was completed yesterday, the deputies started voting on it today. [passage omitted] It was precisely this law that brought parliament to a halt two weeks ago. Today, however, the opposition won, although it could be termed a Pyrrhic victory.

The amendments proposed by Juraj Plesnik, deputy for the Party of the Democratic Left and a member of the Committee for Privatization, were passed easily. [passage omitted]

After further discussion, the government-sponsored amendments to the bill on large-scale privatization were adopted by the deputies. [passage omitted]

International Team Inspects Sliac Air Base

AU1802072794 Bratislava SMENA in Slovak 10 Feb 94 p 2

[Article by "(hn)": "They Are Destroying Aircraft"]

[Text] A three-member international inspection team led by Major M. Havel, an air force expert from Canada, yesterday visited the Sliac Airfield, home of the 1st Slovak Army Air Base. It was interested in the military hardware destined for destruction. The aircraft were next, after the tanks, artillery hardware, and armored combat vehicles. Five type SU-7 aircraft, which were transferred to Sliac last year from Prerov, are to be destroyed. They are being destroyed in accordance with the Paris Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces.

Statistical Office's 1993 Employment Figures

AU1802072894 Bratislava REPUBLIKA in Slovak 14 Feb 94 p 3

[TA SR report: "The Unemployment Level Is Almost 13 Percent"]

[Text] Bratislava—More than 2,192,000 people were employed in the Slovak economy in the fourth quarter of last year. According to the general records on the labor force maintained by the Slovak Statistical Office [SU SR], most citizens—690,000—still work in industry. More than 225,000 people are employed in agriculture, forestry, and gamekeeping. The branch with the third-highest level of employment—209,000 workers—is commerce and repairing vehicles, and consumer goods.

Construction comes fourth on this scale, with 194,000 workers. It is followed by education (190,000), transportation (171,000), and health care (143,800). According to the SU SR's figures, there are 1,010,000 women employed in the Slovak economy. The branches in which most women are employed include education (145,000), commerce and repair services (122,000), and health care (115,000). They are followed by agriculture and other branches.

Most of the employed are in the 30-to-39-year-old age group, while most of the unemployed—almost 98,000—are in the 18-to-24-year-old age group. The same applies to female employment, but with a slight difference [as published]. Most unemployed women—more than 42,000—are in the 30-to-39-year-old age group.

The SU SR also monitored the causes of unemployment for its records on the labor force. Most unemployed people had been laid off because they were superfluous or were never employed. Almost 63,000 people had been made redundant because their employers went out of business. People who have been out of work for one to two years make up the largest group of unemployed; the next group is of people unemployed for six months to a year; and the third-largest group is made up of people unemployed for 1-3 months. Almost 40,000 people in Slovakia have not worked for two to five years, and almost 14,000 people—mostly women—have not worked for more than five years.

The level of unemployment recorded by the SU SR—12.61 percent—is a little lower than the figures from labor offices in Slovakia. It respects the methods used by the International Labor Office. According to it, anyone who works for at least an hour a week is employed. The SU SR has also analyzed the proportion of social benefits in the overall amount of benefits paid to the unemployed. In January, most benefits were unemployment benefits. Their proportion declined gradually to 51.8 percent in June. While no social benefits were paid out in January, the proportion of these increased gradually, to 45 percent.

U.S. Asked To Supply Antiaircraft Missiles

LD1802090494 Budapest Kossuth Radio Network in Hungarian 0800 GMT 18 Feb 94

[Text] The United States is examining the possibility of sending antiaircraft missiles to Hungary, an English language paper in Budapest writes. A BUDAPEST SUN reporter quotes the former American representative of the NATO military committee, who talked about this at a Washington conference. According to a NEPSZAVA article, Rudolf Joo, state secretary at the Defense Ministry, and Ivan Baba, deputy state secretary in the Foreign Ministry, also participated in the consultations, and they confirmed that Hungary asked for American antiaircraft missiles and radar equipment, as it is feared that the Yugoslav war might spread.

Defense Ministry Denies Report

LD1802120594 Budapest Kossuth Radio Network in Hungarian 1100 GMT 18 Feb 94

[Excerpt] The Defense Ministry has denied a report carried by a Hungarian daily contending that Hungary requested a modern American antiaircraft missile system because of the growing tension in our region. According to a ministry spokesman, no talks were held on buying Patriot missiles; what is more, no measures have been taken in connection with the UN ultimatum, which is to expire soon, and a possible NATO air strike in Yugoslavia. [passage omitted]

No NATO Request for Overflights Received

LD1802125094 Budapest Kossuth Radio Network in Hungarian 1200 GMT 18 Feb 94

[Text] The Hungarian Government has not yet received a request from NATO to use Hungarian airspace during a possible air strike in Bosnia. Laszlo Kovacs, chairman of parliament's foreign affairs committee, said this following committee's joint session with the defense committee. How Hungary could adopt the correct behavior to keep away from the conflict without damaging our links with NATO was discussed at the session.

Border Guards on 'Permanent Alert' Near Serbia

LD1702113094 Budapest Kossuth Radio Network in Hungarian 1100 GMT 17 Feb 94

[Text] Border Guard action units are on permanent alert along the southern border in case of possible NATO air strikes in Bosnia, Border Guard Spokesman Attila Krisan said. He added that at the moment there are no signs of border provocations. Two of the 19 Border Guard units are stationed near the Serbian border, but forces can be relocated within a few hours in an emergency situation. The spokesman also said that the Border Guards are prepared to receive refugees.

Army's Deak Cited on NATO Action in Bosnia

AU1702152594 Budapest NEPSZABADSAG in Hungarian 17 Feb 94 p 1

[Interview with Janos Deak, Hungarian Army chief of staff and nominee to the position of army commander, by Attila Zsoldos; place and date not given: "Damaged NATO Aircraft in Hungary?"]

[Text] The Defense Committee of the Hungarian parliament held a hearing for Lieutenant General Janos Deak and unanimously supported his nomination to the position of commander of the Hungarian Army. In the course of this hearing, among other things, Janos Deak declared that the leadership of the Hungarian Army should consider the situation in Bosnia and prepare for any possible consequences.

[Deak] If NATO intervention takes place in Bosnia, we will have to prepare to deal with a possible influx of refugees. It is also possible that allied combat aircraft might get damaged in the course of their action and will be unable to return to their base in Aviano in Italy, and it could happen that they land in Hungary. I am not thinking of the development of an armed incident along our southern border; this is in the interest of neither the Croats nor the Serbs, so there is no such danger. However, in the event of intervention, anything can happen and we must prepare for this.

[Zsoldos] From a military point of view, in your opinion, is intervention in Bosnia inevitable?

[Deak] Several versions are possible. It is possible that there will be no need for intervention, because the sides involved in the conflict fulfill the UN demands. If they only partially fulfill the demands, the armed conflict could still be called off. However, there is a chance of military intervention too.

[Zsoldos] If such intervention takes place, what measures should be taken along our southern border?

[Deak] In such a case, it is the task of the border police to "handle" the expected influx of refugees. The army should increase its radio surveillance so as to have a clear picture of the situation.

[Zsoldos] Have you worked out any special crisis management plan?

[Deak] No. The Hungarian Army would act in accordance with crisis management plan adopted by the late prime minister and the president of the republic two years ago.

Goncz on Relations With NATO, Serbia

PM1802115094 Barcelona LA VANGUARDIA in Spanish 13 Feb 94 p 8

[Interview with Hungarian President Arpad Goncz by Xavier Batalla in Budapest; date not given]

[Excerpt] [passage omitted] [Batalla] Mr. President, four years ago, after the fall of the Communist regime, the Hungarians were enthusiastic about the West. Now, the Hungarian prime minister has referred to a five- or six-year period for joining the European Union (EU), but Community sources continue to speak of a longer delay. Could this stance create a critical attitude to the EU in Hungary?

[Goncz] I believe that the criticism must be placed in the background; first comes necessity. I agree with the prime minister—namely, with the five- or six-year period for joining the EU—but no one could say that what we have received is little. We never expected subsidies; rather, assistance to modernize our economy, and, in return, we offer the West a market. Unfortunately, because of the economic recession, this process is slower than expected.

[Batalla] Do you trust in the Spanish Government's support to join the EU?

[Goncz] It is absolutely essential. I am going to raise the matter (on the visit to Spain), but I am aware that I am knocking at an open door, because over the past two years there have been Spanish statements in favor of our stance. The reservations which may exist in Spain stem from agricultural issues, but the apprehensions seem to have diminished.

[Batalla] But while Hungary is seeking to open the EU's doors, those of NATO have been closed to it. How do you interpret the Partnership for Peace? Do you believe that it is a new Yalta, another division of Europe?

[Goncz] To put it in those terms is rather exaggerated. I do not believe that they wish to exclude us from NATO. There is a certain feeling of anxiety in NATO because it has not yet defined its role in the new European system, and I believe that it has become somewhat alarmed at the responsibility of coping with the security of so vast an area. Therefore the Partnership for Peace is a very important step to guarantee European security.

[Batalla] But do you believe that the aim announced by President Clinton of preventing another wall from being erected in Europe will be achieved in this way?

[Goncz] I hope so.

[Batalla] That is, you do not interpret the Partnership for Peace as a concession to Russia.

[Goncz] Obviously there are signs that, following the change which has occurred in Russia, the Western powers are trying not to provoke Moscow, and so the Russian attitude also influences NATO's decisons. It must not be forgotten that this part of Europe is an intermediate area between Germany and Russia, and if I say that Russia is neither Asia nor Europe but Russia, we have the responsibility of trying to attract Russia as close as possible to Europe, but in view of the internal situation in Russia, the central European countries' entry (into NATO) could be necessary at any time.

[Batalla] So do you fear Russian nationalism?

[Goncz] I do not fear nationalism, but I observe it with concern. However, I do not believe that it could stimulate Hungarian nationalism either on the right or on the left. I trust that the Russian process of change will continue.

[Batalla] But in Budapest there are those who believe that the Partnership for Peace is—like 1938 (Munich), 1956 (Budapest), and 1968 (Prague)—further proof that the West is not prepared to die for central Europe. Do you agree with this opinion?

[Goncz] Thank God, now it (the West) does not have to die for these countries. And let me say that this criticism is made more frequently in the Western press than in the Hungarian press.

[Batalla] Then how do you explain Hungary's change of attitude to Serbia? Why has Budapest softened its attitude to Belgrade, as is clear from a visit by the Hungarian foreign minister, in return for guarantees concerning the Hungarian community of Voivodina?

[Goncz] The economic embargo against Serbia is costing Hungary a very great deal, and we have strictly observed the international sanctions. So far we have received over 70,000 refugees—many of them of Hungarian origin—from Bosnia and Serbia. And from the practical viewpoint, we would not be opposed to easing sanctions, if the UN demands are accepted, because what they are doing is to increase the misery—not resolving the military conflict. Nor must it be forgotten that around 400,000 Hungarians and around 200,000 Serbian refugees live in Voivodina (an autonomous region of Serbia). I believe that it could be of great assistance to Europe that the representative of the Hungarian minority in Voivodina negotiated with Serbian President Milosevic two weeks ago. And so I would not say that we are being softer but that we are in favor of talking. We will not act unilaterally as far as reviewing sanctions is concerned, but—I emphasize—this atttitude is a sign of change not only on Hungary's part but also on Serbia's part.

[Batalla] How could the Yugoslav conflict affect the issue of the Hungarian minorities outside Hungary? Do you deem possible a conflict with the neighboring countries in which Hungarian minorities live?

[Goncz] If by conflict you mean war, I do not believe so, but if you are asking whether we are concerned about the fate of these Hungarian minorities, we will indeed be concerned until an international agreement laying down each side's responsibilities is reached.

[Batalla] Does Budapest have any territorial claim to the regions with Hungarian minorities?

[Goncz] The history of Transylvania (Romania) or Slovakia cannot be understood without the Hungarians, who have lived there for 900 years. We do not wish to change the borders, but we want these minorities to be able to preserve their identities. Any minority is always

a part of two systems—the motherland and the country in which it lives. If we decide that Catalonia is a constituent element of Spain, Catalonia is obliged to have two kinds of loyalty—to Spain and to Catalonia. As far as irredentism is concerned, 6 million Romanians and 2.5 million Hungarians live in Transylvania. Nobody can believe that we would want to have 6 million Romanians within our borders.

[Batalla] Hungary has experienced a major transformation since 1990. But, with a view to the elections on 8 May, polls indicate a strong advance by the Socialist Party (formerly communist). Do you believe that the social discontent of part of the electorate with the pace of change could benefit the former communists, as has happened in Lithuania and Poland?

[Goncz] We are talking about the Socialist Party, which was originally created by ex-communists who support reform, which currently identifies itself with social democracy, and which has for the last four years been working in parliament as a democratic party. But in any case, I believe that two possibilities could arise from the elections: either a conservative-liberal coalition or a socialist-liberal coalition. One thing is clear, and I can guarantee it: Hungary's positions on the economy and on foreign policy are not going to change in either case.

SZDSZ Criticizes Boross AWACS Statement

AU1602145894 Budapest MAGYAR HIRLAP in Hungarian 16 Feb 94 p 3

["S.I."-signed report: "SZDSZ Criticism to Boross"]

[Text] The Federation of Young Democrats [Fidesz] is thinking in terms of a new government, as opposed to the general view according to which Fidesz is ready, as an ally, to help the Hungarian Democratic Forum [MDF] remain in government. Talking about the party's foreign policy ideas at a consultation on 15 February, Jozsef Szajer, an Fidesz leader and the party's main foreign policy expert, used the term "in case of a government change." In addition to Szajer, the Foreign Affairs Association on 15 February also heard Istvan Szent-Ivanyi, foreign affairs spokesman of the Alliance of Free Democrats [SZDSZ].

According to Szent-Ivanyi, Prime Minister Peter Boross went too far when he announced that NATO's AWACS flying radar stations will not be able to use Hungarian airspace during NATO's aerial attacks on Bosnia. Szent-Ivanyi approved of the prime minister's efforts to prevent Hungary from getting involved in the issue but, in his view, it would have been more appropriate to simply remind NATO of the Hungarian permit given to the AWACS planes (according to which they cannot be used for military activities) and he claimed that the possible withdrawal of the mandate of the AWACS places would have required parliamentary consent.

In connection with the Balkan crisis, Szajer said that Hungary's scope for maneuver is small, and an open debate on Hungarian policy has not developed. Szajer supported Budapest's restrained policy, "maintaining that we formerly supported more radical solutions," but he did not explain what kind of radical solutions he meant. Szajer said that Foreign Minister Geza Jeszenszky's January visit to Belgrade—which has previously been criticized by Szent-Ivanyi and again in the Foreign Affairs Association on 15 February—"was a step in the right direction but at the worst possible time," and he objected that no coordination had taken place before the visit.

The Foreign Affairs Association wanted to learn about the foreign policy concept of the two parties. It emerged from Szent-Ivanyi's and Szajer's report that Fidesz considers European integration as the main goal, while the SZDSZ's main goal is to improve relations with the neighboring countries. Szajer did not appear to be as unequivocal as Szent-Ivanyi in the issue that Hungary does not have territorial demands from its neighbors. Szajer revealed that if the situation had not been so acute at the time, then Fidesz possibly would not have voted in favor of the Hungarian-Ukrainian basic agreement (which states that the two countries will not have territorial demands against each other in the future either), because Fidesz was not fully satisfied with the passages on the protection of national minorities.

Talking about the foreign policy consensus, Szajer said that Fidesz does not intend to form a consensus with the extreme parties, and he mentioned the Hungarian Justice and Life Party.

SZDSZ Leader Outlines Foreign Policy Views

LD1702155294 Budapest Kossuth Radio Network in Hungarian 1150 GMT 17 Feb 94

[Interview with Istvan Szent-Ivanyi, leader of the Alliance of Free Democrats, SZDSZ, by correspondent Jozsef Barat in Budapest; date not given; from the "Foreign Political Observer" program—recorded]

[Excerpts] [Barat] [passage omitted] Where is consensus in Hungarian foreign policy, and where is there not consensus? How does the SZDSZ think we should represent our often-mentioned national interests in a different, more effective way?

[Szent-Ivanyi] [passage omitted] There are a few important areas where consensus among political parties has fractured—primarily between the government and the opposition and the government and the SZDSZ. The most important is Hungary's foreign policy with its neighbors. In this field, we think that the Hungarian Government's policy has not achieved its aim. It could not effectively contribute to the improvement of the situation of Hungarians beyond the borders, while our relations with several neighbors have significantly deteriorated—which has served neither Hungary's interests nor the interests of Hungarians who live there.

Therefore, we have been proposing for more than a year to put this policy with our neighbors on a new basis, to reestablish balance between the protection of minority rights, the support of minorities, and bilateral ties. This is a point where revival is needed by all means.

We could not entirely agree with the government's security policy endeavors either. Fundamentally, of course, we agree that Hungary needs security, and it has to be found somewhere within the existing European structures. It has not been debated. However, the government has strongly concentrated on the acquisition of external guarantees. It would not have been wrong on its own, if they had managed to acquire these external guarantees—for example, NATO membership or a guarantee undertaken by NATO. It would have really contributed to Hungary's security.

Unfortunately, it was clear that NATO, the leading European countries, and the United States are not ready to give these guarantees. So it follows that we have to reconsider our security policy and lay emphasis on new elements—for example, in Hungary's foreign policy conduct, in our relations with neighboring countries, in Hungary's economic integration with European institutions and with European countries.

A rather strange debate has evolved about NATO membership. Foreign Minister Geza Jeszenszky said that all those who want Hungary to be a NATO member should vote for the MDF [Hungarian Democratic Forum]. Gyula Horn, chairman of the socialists wants a referendum on the matter. In the meantime, it has became quite clear the NATO does not want to admit us at all.

[Szent-Ivanyi] As regards Jeszenszky's remark, I cannot consider it anything else but a campaign trick. [passage omitted]

Horn's opinion could be worth considering, but we are very far from a referendum for the time being. It would be ridiculous to hold a referendum about Hungary's joining NATO when NATO has no willingness to accept us. [passage omitted]

[Barat] In your view, what sort of policy should be followed in connection with NATO's role in Bosnia?

[Szent-Ivanyi] The truth is that Hungarian foreign policy has no clear line in this issue, and this confuses our partners. Earlier on, the Hungarian Government very resolutely took the position of urging strong intervention and tough sanctions. I think that this was a slightly stronger position than we should have adopted considering our special situation. [passage omitted]

Now, it seems as if Hungarian foreign policy has taken a different direction, thereby endangering the image of being reliable. Jeszenszky's visit to Belgrade and his statements there in connection with sanctions caused doubt regarding Hungary's political reliability.

The statements of [Prime Minister] Peter Boross about the AWACS planes are also similar. Boross wanted to formulate correct objectives but put it in a way that can be very easily misinterpreted. We have to bear in mind three objectives: First, we have to reassure the Hungarian public that Hungary will not get involved in a crisis. This is correct.

Second, it is worth making a gesture toward Belgrade, for the interests of the Hungarians living there require this. However, there is also a third objective, which has been ignored by both Jeszenszky and Boross. We wish to cooperate with the European organizations and the United Nations, and it is not expedient to confuse the image formed about us. [passage omitted]

If NATO wants to extend the original mandate it does indeed have to turn to us, to the Hungarian parliament and not to the prime minister, and the parliament has to make a decision. [passage omitted]

Let us not forget that the AWACS planes mean the first and only concrete military cooperation between Hungary and NATO. Since Hungary wanted the Partnership for Peace and expressed willingness for cooperation, it is a confusing signal that she wants to cancel the only existing cooperation, in fact, without any particular reason.

[Barat] Well, yes, but Partnership for Peace is not a war partnership, either in name or in content.

[Szent-Ivanyi] I agree. If NATO wants to transform this assignment to a warlike partnership, then NATO cannot oblige us to agree, and we must not accept it either.

Fidesz Presents Main Foreign Policy Goals

AU1702193194 Budapest UJ MAGYARORSZAG in Hungarian 17 Feb 94 p 3

["Cs.S."-signed report: "The Federation of Young Democrats' Foreign Policy Program—Domestic Stability and Constitutionality"]

[Text] With the elections approaching, the parties one by one are presenting their foreign policy programs and UJ MAGYARORSZAG is trying to publish these as they appear.

In the coming period, Hungary's main tasks are to preserve the changes in foreign policy orientation that have taken place in the past years and, within this, to reintegrate into Europe, according to parliamentary deputy Jozsef Szajer, chairman of the National Committee and the Foreign Affairs Cabinet of the Federation of Young Democrats [Fidesz]. Szajer presented his party's foreign policy program as part of a series of lectures organized by the Foreign Affairs Association. At the first forum held in the conference room of the Political and Legal Sciences Faculty of the Lorand Eotvos University of Sciences, parliamentary deputy Istvan Szent-Ivanyi, member of the Management Body of the Alliance of Free Democrats [SZDSZ] and the party's foreign affairs spokesman was the other lecturer.

Szajer explained that the Fidesz's foreign policy concept rests on three inseparable principles, namely joining the European Union [EU], establishing regional security, and satisfying national minority policy. Out of these, preference has to be given to the process of European integration, and Hungary's domestic stability and solid constitutional system are the main preconditions for this. As a second condition, the Fidesz attributes special importance to establishing lasting conflict-free relations with the neighboring countries.

In the Fidesz's view, preparing the country for EU membership is the task of the country's future leadership. The preparation includes, among other things, grass-roots development that will result in organizational compatibility, new economic legislation, and legal harmonization. Szajer pointed out that the supervision of European affairs must be in one hand in Hungary; therefore, the Foreign Ministry should take over the leading role within a moderately decentralized structure. A realistic time for joining the EU must be set out and the program must be designed accordingly.

Talking about the other two pillars of the Fidesz's foreign policy concept, namely the national minority and regional policy, Szajer said: It is vitally important to form a delicate balance between the legal protection of Hungarians living beyond the borders and establishing good-neighborly relations. He emphasized the importance of legitimate national minority organizations—the authentic representatives of the given areas—and maintaining relations with them. On the issue of the borders, the Fidesz is firmly convinced that changing the borders cannot be a solution to any problems.

The essence of the party's regional policy is that it firmly supports all cooperation in the Central Eastern European area, including joint action by the Visegrad countries in the interest of integration into Europe.

Szajer's report was preceded by Szent-Ivanyi's summary. Szent-Ivanyi again expounded that the SZDSZ had drawn up a strategic program that has realistic and achievable foreign policy goals.

Foreign Minister Outlines Policy Toward East

LD1702154394 Warsaw PAP in Polish 1110 GMT 17 Feb 94

[Text] Warsaw, 17 Feb—The opening of a new chapter in Polish eastern policy was announced by Foreign Affairs Minister Andrzej Olechowski at a meeting of the Senate Foreign Affairs Commission on Thursday. Olechowski presented the main assumptions of this policy.

The Polish foreign minister declared that the group of states of special interest to Poland was made up of Russia, Ukraine, Belarus, the Baltic states, Moldova, and Kazakhstan. According to him, these countries are important from the point of view of Polish political and economic interests as well as from the point of view of Poland's security.

"We are vitally interested in the strenghtening of national identity and democratic and promarket transformations of these states," stated Olechowski. At the same time, he added that Poland "would not be prejudiced against close ties between these countries" if these were established without violence or violations of democratic procedures.

"We want a clear warming up of the climate in our relations with Russia," Olechowski declared. Among joint actions that Poland intends to propose to Russia, he mentioned diplomatic consultations, exchange of experiences in the fields of local democracy and agriculture, and coordination of struggle against organized crime.

The minister emphasized that this policy of "openness and friendliness in relations with Russia" would depend on whether Moscow respects the "strategic options of Polish foreign policy"—that is, Poland's striving to participate in the European Union, NATO, and the Western European Union.

According to Olechowski, friendly relations between peoples in this part of Europe could be threatened by intolerance. "We are noticing symptoms of such intolerance in Russia," the minister said. According to him, the neo-imperial option in Russian foreign policy, which results from unwillingness among parts of the political and military elites to change traditional methods of thinking and acting, should be treated as a real threat.

Olechowski said that the independence of Ukraine had a "strategic dimension" for Poland. "We will act for this country getting its due place in international politics, corresponding with Ukraine's potential," he announced.

The head of Polish diplomacy underscored that the support for political and military stability in the neighboring region was an important part of the Polish policy, which would contribute to the building of European security. "Poland resolutely supports the process of linking the East and the West into one whole," Olechowski said. He underscored that, by participating in Partnership for Peace, Poland not only strives after membership in NATO but also wants to use the initiative for cooperation with Russia, Ukraine, Belarus, and Lithuania.

According to Olechowski, the creation of new possibilities for economic cooperation is an important part of Poland's Eastern policy. He announced that he would recommend to the government the undertaking and the implementation of programs supporting relations between individuals conducive to creating mutual capital links, supporting Polish exporters and making possible a better use of Poland's geographical position.

Olechowski also announced a program for supporting the development of the market and democracy in the countries encompassed by the Eastern policy. To coordinate this policy, the minister plans to appoint a plenipotentiary for Eastern policy in the Foreign Ministry and intends to suggest to the government to set up an Eastern policy council.

SLD's Kwasniewski on 3 Feb Talks With Pawlak

PM1802125594 Lodz GLOS PORANNY in Polish 5-6 Feb 94 pp 1-2

[Article by Henryk Sroczynski: "'Let Us Not Invoke the Bogeyman of Financial Rackets...': Aleksander Kwasniewski Talks to GLOS PORANNY"]

[Text] "It is a pity that you did not wait for the conclusion of my talks with Waldemar Pawlak yesterday [Thursday 3 Feb] because I intended to invite you all for a pizza afterward," Aleksander Kwasniewski quipped to a group of journalists in the Sejm corridors yesterday. This was greeted with laughter because, the previous night, the two leaders left the building of the Council of Ministers Office quietly by a side gate, just as they had entered it earlier, well after 2300 hours.

Following that evening meeting as well as the one that took place yesterday afternoon, the Democratic Left Alliance [SLD] leader stressed that the talks, held after the present government's 100 days in office, were essential: Both sides, which had never collaborated officially before, should assess pragmatically what was good and what was bad in their joint track record so far. In Aleksander Kwasniewski's opinion, the case of [the resignation of Finance] Vice Minister Borowski, which arose in connection with Stefan Kawalec's dismissal, was a simple case of "casualty at work" and could not in any way affect relations within the coalition. According to Kwasniewski, the prime minister still wanted to work with Borowski, whom he regarded as an important figure in the government. "There is no other way than reinforcing the coalition," Aleksander Kwasniewski insisted, "because it would be a pity to waste time on conflicts."

GLOS PORANNY's reporter asked Aleksander Kwasniewski whether matters connected with privatization were one of the subjects of his talks with the prime minister. In reply, the SLD leader said: "Too much of a fuss is made about this problem. We have agreed with

the prime minister that, beginning next week, we will talk about that whole question in the company of competent people. We do not score any credits by our present handling of the privatization question. The prime minister had an opportunity to talk in Brussels with representatives of the European Union as well as with U.S. investors, and he knows that they all await answers on questions of privatization. We cannot talk about these questions at the same time with the voice of Ownership Transformations Minister Wieslaw Kaczmarek and that of Bogdan Pek (Polish Peasant Party), chairman of the Sejm Commission for Ownership Transformations, because no sensible concept will arise from the combination of these two views." The SLD leader also told us: "It is premature and probably quite inappropriate to talk about the Bank Slaski [Silesian Bank] racket [reference to recent stock exchange dealings]. I do not believe that anyone could formulate such far-reaching conclusions from the quite unique situation that prevails at the Warsaw Stock Exchange. Let us not make such rash judgments. If such an admittedly somewhat unfortunate operation connected with the Bank Slaski can become a potential starting point for a government crisis, we should draw only one conclusion from it: We must allow no more risky operations like that—no privatization, no stock exchange, no capital turnover. But what can we have instead? Well, we already know, more or less, what we can have instead. We cannot claim that we have not tried an alternative solution before. In my opinion, we should rather reinforce those mechanisms that permit better and more effective functioning of financial systems, and we should draw appropriate conclusions from our failures. But let us not resort to invoking the bogeyman of financial rackets."

National Bank Chairman Interviewed

PM1802110494 Gdansk DZIENNIK BALTYCKI in Polish 4 Feb 94 pp 1, 3

[Interview with Hanna Gronkiewicz-Waltz, chairman of the Polish National Bank, by Jan Kreft; place and date not given]

[Text] [Kreft] Six months ago you were reporting to Hanna Suchocka's government on the difficult situation of the Polish banking system. How do you assess the present condition of our banks?

[Gronkiewicz-Waltz] The situation is largely unchanged. Several new banks were set up, and they are now in bad shape, too. In addition, those that were in trouble six months ago have failed to ameliorate their condition.

[Kreft] So far, the Polish National Bank [NBP] is almost the only one prepared to come to the assistance of other banks when they find themselves in difficulties. The parliamentary debate on this year's budget contained charges that the NBP was too involved in "pumping" money into private banks. What is the government's position on this problem?

[Gronkiewicz-Waltz] Naturally, both the government and parliament demur at taking on tasks of such nature. After all, such tasks are not part of any supervisory bodies' brief. The NBP should merely recommend the appropriate steps to be taken; it cannot take upon itself the entire burden of the remedial operations. The involvement of the NBP and the Bank of Economic Initiatives in the rescue operation in aid of the Development Bank of Lodz and the takeover of the Prosper Bank and the First Commercial Bank of Lublin (set up by Bogatin) was necessary because the threatened collapse and liquidation of those banks would have put an intolerable burden on NBP finances. Although we still have not set up a deposit insurance society, we would be inclined to protect our clients' interests up to a certain limit, remembering that, when one bank collapses, as happened in the Coastal Region, a decidedly dubious climate soon develops around all of the other ones.

I will not deny that I found it rather difficult to persuade the previous government to embark on the process of restoring our banks to health. I trust that I will have an easier job of it with the current government.

[Kreft] Did the divergence of views between you and the previous government concern some specific cases, or did it rest on a range of general phenomena common to the whole banking system in Poland?

[Gronkiewicz-Waltz] It concerned institutional solutions, notably five fundamental instruments of the system of restoring banks to sound health applied universally throughout the world, whose application in the Polish banking system was recommended by the NBP.

[Kreft] Immediately after the parliamentary election, without knowing the new government's makeup, you advised the left to spread the realization of its election promises over several years, did you not?

[Gronkiewicz-Waltz] More and more people from the very core of the left-wing orientation are now talking about the need to spread these promises over a longer period of time.

[Kreft] You also stipulated at the same time that the post of finance minister should be given to a person ready for compromise and...for a fight against inflation. Did Minister Borowski [who resigned after the interview] fulfill these expectations?

[Gronkiewicz-Waltz] Minister Borowski is a rather determined person, but he has not pressed for an unjustified monetary supply. Such pressure was exerted by members of relevant Sejm commissions.

[Kreft] During the Sejm debate on this year's budget, the NBP became a target for intense attacks. The Union of Labor charged it with not allowing a sufficient flow of funds to the economy, did it not?

[Gronkiewicz-Waltz] I am quite immune to such pressures. The present Sejm is, as a whole, oriented toward a loosening of monetary policy. When we compare the

attitudes of the budget commissions in the previous and the current Sejms, we must conclude that, in the former case, the coalition members demonstrated greater coalition discipline. However, I still remember the statement made by Jerzy Osiatynski shortly after he was made finance minister. He said that the "hole" in the budget would come up to 100 trillion zlotys [Z]. That frightened me quite considerably. Of course, we soon came to an agreement over that question.

The present parliament is characterized by a greater differentiation of positions even within individual parties.

Pressure to print more money has always taken place and will continue to take place everywhere under the sun. In 1992, I was there when the German deputy finance minister launched an attack on the Bundesbank's financial policy, and that, after all, is something that does not happen all that often.

[Kreft] How do you assess this year's planned budget deficit?

[Gronkiewicz-Waltz] It is contained within fairly decent limits, although even this could be the subject of a lengthy debate. The beginning of the year has been promising. I do not remember another year with such a substantial prevalence of revenues over expenditure.

[Kreft] The NBP will finance the budget to the tune of Z30-35 trillion. But the parliamentary act on the NBP lowers the ceiling of the central bank's involvement in the budget to a much lower level.

[Gronkiewicz-Waltz] The relevant article of that act was routinely suspended for a great many years in the past. During the life of the Olszewski and Suchocka governments, the level defined by the act was very seriously exceeded. Such extensive involvement on the part of the NBP has its roots in the insufficiently developed money market.

[Kreft] Do you share the opinion that, in the present economic situation, devaluation of the zloty would create more problems than it would solve?

[Gronkiewicz-Waltz] I believe that devaluation always causes more damage. Decisions to introduce abrupt devaluation are usually made when something is very amiss with the state monetary reserves. On the other hand, a lack of equilibrium in the trade balance is a natural phenomenon in a country experiencing an economic recovery process. As a result of the latest, 8-percent currency devaluation, we gained an increase of only 1 percent in our export figures. I believe that encouraging results can be achieved only through applying such government measures as, for example, an imports tax. No one has ever managed to improve a national economy permanently by a drastic devaluation of the currency rate.

[Kreft] But your views on this matter are not shared by a sizeable group of politicians, are they?

[Gronkiewicz-Waltz] Nevertheless, my views are presented more and more often in the public forum. And they are certainly more popular today than when I assumed office as NBP chairman.

[Kreft] To go back to your "wish list": Two years ago you wished to see an increase in the level of economic education available to the public that would bring it to the level of economic knowledge displayed by the German public. Over there, the main thing the population expects is the lowest possible level of inflation.

[Gronkiewicz-Waltz] My adviser at the Bundesbank insists that the Germans have always remembered the massive inflation in the 1920's, as well as the inflation of the postwar years. I believe that we should just remember our own inflation in the 1980's.

[Kreft] But we are, on the contrary, all too ready to forget it....

[Gronkiewicz-Waltz] During the election campaign, inflation was not too painful. Recent violent reactions to the November inflation should make advocates of a greater "loosening" of our monetary policy aware that inflation threatens their voters' interests.

[Kreft] You have an excellent opportunity to make comparisons: Is the present Sejm's level of economic education higher than that exhibited by the last one?

[Gronkiewicz-Waltz] Naturally, I will refuse to answer this question. I can only refer you to statements made by representatives of the present Budget Commission, who maintain that theirs is the best budget commission ever....

[Kreft] Recent opinions quoted in NBP circles indicate that it is perfectly feasible to accelerate the rate of inflation.

[Gronkiewicz-Waltz] You are talking about the so-called press-generated facts, which create their own reality and reinforce public expectations of continually increasing inflation as if a proportion of the press believes in the principle that the worse things look for the present government, the better for them. I believe that, regardless of our individual sense of financial ease and comfort, we should all be interested in stabilizing inflation at a reasonably low level.

[Kreft] But press commentators suggest that this is positively the last moment to increase the rate of inflation....

[Gronkiewicz-Waltz] We must stay cool and watch the developments calmly. I can only say that we hold constant discussions on precisely that subject.

[Kreft] It is hardly reasonable to expect that inflation will be stemmed without the need for sacrifices and without lowering the level of social benefits expenditure. Don't believe that we have again arrived at a moment when it will be necessary to tighten our belts?

[Gronkiewicz-Waltz] The problem lies not so much in being forced to lower the social benefits expenditure but in changing the entire concept of budgetary expenditure as such. I am, of course, speaking here of the huge sums allocated to social benefits funds in the past budgets. Over the past few years, we have not been able to bring about a reform of the social insurance system, and this has made a vital difference to the independence of decisions in the sphere of public finance. We cannot begin to hope for a decrease in inflation to a level below 20 percent without some radical cuts. In this sense, Poland is very much like Hungary, where they now have inflation on the order of 23 percent, and where they cannot even begin to reduce it because they also have been unsuccessful in dealing with the basic underlying difficulties.

[Kreft] Do you agree with the claim that our greatest financial threat comes from the need to service the internal debt? The only noninflationary way to reduce the deficit would be teh purchase of our treasury bonds by foreign banks. But the latter are not at all keen to buy them....

[Gronkiewicz-Waltz] Because, among other things, they are afraid of devaluation. It is true that the servicing of our internal debt does present great difficulties at the moment. We are facing a whole range of so-called inflexible expenses, which seriously hamper our ability to maneuver within the budget framework. On the other hand, I am pleased that that problem has now, at long last, been noticed and acknowledged.

[Kreft] How do you assess the development of the Stock Exchange?

[Gronkiewicz-Waltz] So far, our Stock Exchange has enjoyed the opinion of being the best in the countries of the former socialist bloc, as well as enjoying a high—maybe even too high—degree of public confidence. The Stock Exchange is an institution of the market economy system, and the latter is only now beginning to expand in our country—hence, a number of anomalies that are perfectly natural at this stage. However, it would be dangerous to overestimate it and place excessive emphasis on stock exchange operations at this stage. That is why it is vitally necessary that the Stock Exchange be expanded and that many more companies enter it soon. This will make it much more stable. I believe that this is exactly what will happen. Minister Kaczmarek is determined to privatize further enterprises as soon as possible.

[Kreft] You are very protective of the watertight quality of our banking system. How, then, do you assess the unrestricted freedom of draining stock exchange profits away from our country by foreign investors?

[Gronkiewicz-Waltz] Without them, the stock exchange would not be able to develop at all.

[Kreft] The stock exchange and the banks are seen as good places for laundering dirty money. How much truth is there in that belief?

[Gronkiewicz-Waltz] I believe that we have very good and very precise legislative regulations protecting our banking system against that danger. We are able to check up on our bank investors, and we have a good system of verifying their agents' credentials. There have been instances in which, at our insistence that they disclose the identity of the true investors, such agents withdrew their offers to invest their capital in our banks. Among other things, this is also one of the reasons behind our decision to engage the NBP in the operation of restoring Prosper Bank and the First Commercial Bank of Lublin to financial health: The provenance of the money that was originally supposed to shore up these two banks proved on closer inspection not to be satisfactorily explained.

There is no doubt that the practice of laundering dirty money should be prosecuted by the law. It will not be much good if the only course of action open to us is mere monitoring of financial transactions. There must be statutory legal sanctions, too.

[Kreft] Where does the NBP chairman invest her savings?

[Gronkiewicz-Waltz] In the bank. I also bought some state treasury bonds in order to be able to claim personal tax allowance on them.

[Kreft] Thank you for talking to us.

Chebeleu Salutes Russian Initiative on Sarajevo

AU1802131094 Bucharest Radio Romania Network in Romanian 1100 GMT 18 Feb 94

[Text] Presidential Spokesman Ambassador Traian Chebeleu held his weekly news conference at Cotroceni Palace today. Referring to the recent initiative of the Russian Federation, which, in the opinion of one of the journalists, has eased the situation in Sarajevo, Chebeleu said that our country salutes any action that leads to the calming down of the situation in that area and that supports the peace process.

Our correspondent, Sorin Croitorescu, reports that in the beginning of the news conference Mr. Chebeleu read out a statement referring to the arrest of a Craiova journalist, Nicolae Andrei [for having published two items allegedly offending President Ion Iliescu]. The statement says that the presidency has made no complaints incriminating that journalist, after which it notes that this is not a singular case in the Romanian press, despite the fact that one of the fundamental principles of democracy is the respect that ought to be shown to state authorities.

Miners Postpone March on Bucharest

AU1702202694 Bucharest Radio Romania Network in Romanian 1800 GMT 17 Feb 94

[Text] At his office this afternoon Gorj County Prefect Gheorghe Marculescu met with mining trade union leaders Miron Cosma and Ilie Ciortan. He conveyed a message addressed by the Ministry of Industry to the Confederation of Mining Trade Unions, in which Industry Minister Dumitru Popescu agreed to receive a five-man delegation representing the Lignitul Mining Trade Union Federation at 1600 tomorrow. The two union leaders acknowledged the message and said that future labor action would depend on the outcome of these talks.

The Gorj County prefect told our correspondent that he expects the majority of the miners currently present in Targu Jiu to go home and await the results of the talks at the Ministry of Industry headquarters.

The strike organized in Targu Jiu by the Lignitul Mining Trade Union Federations proceeded today in a tense atmosphere, as the participants were expecting some message to come from the government or the Ministry of Industry, our correspondent Titus Stoichitoiu reports. The several thousand miners that went there from various mining units affiliated to this trade union federation alternated between the headquarters of the Brown Coal Mining Public Corporation and that of the Gorj County Prefect's Office, accompanying Miron Cosma, who by noon was joined by a group of mining union leaders from the Jiu Valley.

In the evening they told the miners that it had been agreed that tomorrow a four-man delegation of the Lignitul Mining Trade Union Federation, together with Ilie Ciortan, the chairman of the Jiu Valley Miners' Trade Union League, should go for negotiations to the headquarters of the Ministry of Industry.

The miners were disappointed by the news and requested that all of them go to Bucharest. However, they were calmed down by Miron Cosma, who said that it would be better to wait for the results of the negotiations. Thus, they agreed to return tomorrow—if possible, in greater numbers—to the same place next to the Targu Jiu Mining Public Corporation, and if by 1600 the demands are not solved, they should leave for the capital.

The chairman of Romania's Mining Trade Union Confederation, Miron Cosma, also said, quote, we will not give in under any circumstances. This is the last chance that we will give those who are responsible for the solution of our demands, unquote, after which he appealed to the miners to go home.

Government Rejects Demands of Cosma-Led Miners

AU1702202994 Bucharest Radio Romania Network in Romanian 1800 GMT 17 Feb 94

[Text] The Romanian Government issued a communique today in connection with the strike of the brown coal miners belonging to the Lignitul Mining Trade Union Federation. The communique points out the fact that at the beginning of February the confederation of mining trade unions, which is coordinated by Miron Cosma, presented a number of claims principally referring to the elimination of the financial blockage, the correction of certain stipulations of the collective labor contract [words indistinct], the improvement of labor conditions at certain brown coal mining units, and the replacement of certain leaders of the Brown Coal Mining Public Corporation. All those issues have been examined by the government together with the Ministry of Industry and representatives of the trade union confederation, and deadlines and responsibilities were also established.

Despite all this, the communique stresses, beginning 14 February, the Lignitul Mining Trade Union Federation, which is affiliated to the union confederation coordinated by Miron Cosma, triggered a conflict situation, invoking further demands: A bonus amounting to 100,000 for each person—besides the bonus of 50-55,000 lei for each person promised for the Christmas holidays—as well as the replacement of the Gorj County prefect. Regarding these further demands, the communique says, the government considers that the main point in it, namely the 100,000-lei additional bonus, represents a wish suggested by Miron Cosma to the trade union in question, with the intent of extending his personal sphere of influence over Gorj County. That demand does not comply with the stipulations of the collective labor contract and cannot be endorsed owing to the current financial situation. The demand requesting the ousting of the Brown Coal Mining Public

Corporation's leadership and that of the county prefect do not belong among the attributions of trade union bodies.

The way in which the members of the Lignitul Mining Trade Union Federations manifested themselves over the past period has nothing in common with the way union members claim their rights. Their moves, which culminated in assaulting the representatives of the [public corporation] administration and public order bodies, as well as their breaking into the headquarters of the public corporation and the illegal occupation of that building, has generated and is still generating disorder that causes economic losses worth many millions of lei.

On 15 February the whole personnel of the operative leadership of the public corporation had to be moved to the headquarters of the Rovinari branch.

From among the 75,000 employees of the public corporation over 70,000 are working normally, delivering 80-85,000 tonnes of brown coal daily to the thermal power plants and the population, thus fully satisfying current demands.

The government is compelled to take appropriate measures to recover all material losses and to punish the persons who caused them. The maintenance of the current state of disorder, the continuation of assaults, and the violation of the laws of the country will aggravate the deeds for which the persons in question will be held responsible.

Under such circumstances, the government will take the necessary steps to take to account, according to law, Miron Cosma, the leader of the Mining Trade Union Confederation, for having instigated to public disorder and having led the destabilizing actions over the past days in the municipality of Targu Jiu and in the entire region. The population, as well as the real representatives of the mining trade unions, have disapproved and condemned the situation thus created.

We address an appeal to the miners who have participated in the aforementioned actions which violate current laws, to stop letting themselves dragged by Miron Cosma into such acts, which are provoked by him for personal purposes, while ignoring their economic and social consequences.

The government considers that there are proper conditions and a proper atmosphere for work to be resumed in all mining units and for the examining of the claims under civilized circumstances and not under the pressure of street disorder that contradicts norms law and order, concludes the communique released by the press office of the executive.

Motru Miners Pledge To 'Restore Order'

AU1702204994 Bucharest Radio Romania Network in Romanian 1800 GMT 17 Feb 94

[Text] The Salvamin Union of the Motru miners trade unions, reuniting all mining trade unions of the Motru basin, issued a communique protesting the way in which the personnel of the Ministry of the Interior are carrying out their duties. It is not tolerable, the communique stresses, that industrial or public units should be attacked by gangs of so-called miners who are led by Miron Cosma, while those units are left unprotected by personnel belonging to the Ministry of the Interior.

In that sense we are addressing an appeal to the ministry in question calling for it to carry out its duty with respect to those who are violating the laws of the country. If no such steps are taken within the next 10 hours, the miners belonging to the Salvamin Union will take over the task of restore order to Targu Jiu, regardless of the labor conflict currently taking place there, concludes the communique signed by the chairman of the Salvamin Union, Viorel Teleleteu.

BNS Leader Sums Up Talks With President

AU1802083694 Bucharest Radio Romania Network in Romanian 2000 GMT 17 Feb 94

[Text] At Cotroceni Palace this evening Romanian President Ion Iliescu received a delegation of the National Trade Union Block [BNS], led by its leader Dumitru Costin.

During the meeting, the BNS leaders discussed the six issues they announced from the very beginning of the talks.

The talks concluded half an hour ago and the BNS leader stated the following to our reporter Sorin Croitorescu:

[Begin Costin recording] In our talks with President Iliescu this evening we advanced six points. As we affirmed at the beginning of the discussions, we had the advantage of being the third confederation that met with the president, so the joint claims of the major trade unions have already been discussed and over discussed. Thus, during our talks this evening we had the opportunity to also approach other subjects that we consider of maximum importance.

First of all, we provided arguments and reasons that led to the current relation between our confederation and Romania's government. The reason is the lack of a relation of partnership that President Iliescu believes to be the basis for any relations in any society, especially in a society with problems such as the current Romanian society.

The second point of our discussion referred to the issue of joint claims, that is the claims of CNSRL [National Confederation of Romania's Free Trade Unions]-Cartel Alfa-BNS, a point on which we did not linger too long because our viewpoints, namely the viewpoints of the two confederations, do not differ.

The third point of our discussions was the draft social accord that our confederation submitted at the end of January, and we were surprised to see that there was no reaction whatsoever from the government, presidency,

political parties, or even trade unions. Very few people praised or criticized this material and we still believe that only through a social-economic accord can this moment of crisis be overcome.

The fourth issue discussed was the memorandum with the IMF. Before the start of talks in the Romanian Parliament, we gave the press an analysis that we allowed ourselves to make. We believe that it is absolutely necessary to present a viewpoint on this memorandum, because even on a superficial reading of the text, one can notice that the memorandum lacks the social component. And as far as all current major transformations that Romania's government wishes to carry out are concerned, if these are not supported by a program of retraining and by the creation of new jobs, then the idea of reform will be destroyed from the very beginning. The reason for this, as I have already mentioned, the social costs will be very high and if we, as partners—on the one hand we, the trade union confederations and on the other hand the executive power—will not know how to find a moment of balance in which the costs of the transition should be at the lower possible level, at an acceptable level, we will discredit from the beginning the idea of reform.

This evening, it was suggested to us that we should continue the discussions that started yesterday with the executive and as soon as we almost reach the final stage of the talks—regardless of whether or not all issues will have been solved—we will certainly have the mediation of the presidential institution in the conflict that exists between trade union groups, that is trade union confederations and the Romanian Government. [end recording]

Journalist Arrested for 'Offending' Iliescu

AU1802130694 Bucharest Radio Romania Network in Romanian 2000 GMT 17 Feb 94

[Text] The AFP news agency carries an item transmitted from Bucharest reporting that on 14 February in Craiova the police arrested Nicolae Andrei, a Romanian journalist, the author of certain news articles published in December 1993 which are offensive to President Ion Iliescu. AFP names the police press office as its source.

In connection with that case, AFP also cites the statement of Petre Mihai Bacanu, the chairman of the Romanian Journalists' Association, in which Bacanu says, quote, it is an unprecedented case after the 1989 December revolution, that a harmless article should trigger such a harsh reaction, unquote.

Related to this case, the press office of the Police General Inspectorate wishes to point out the following things:

Investigating the daily CUVINTUL SECURITATII [THE WORD OF SECURITATE], which is written by the journalists of the review CONFLICT, formerly bearing the name CARTEL, it was found that some of its items have a character that offends certain political personalities. Thus, the contents of two items titled "The Tale of the Pig—A Christmas Fairy Tale" [Povestea porcului—un basm de Craciuni] and "The Story of the Animal" [Povestea animalului] are obviously offending Romania's president and carry all the elements necessary for them to be regarded as the infraction of offending the authorities, which is punished by Article 238, Paragraph 1, of the Penal Code.

Despite the fact that the two items were signed with the pseudonyms Santa Claus and Veterinary Doctor, as a result of the steps that were taken, their author could still be identified as Andrei Nicolae, aged 31, a technical-high-school graduate, currently a journalist with the aforementioned publication. He lives in the village of Cosoveni, in Dolj County. Setting out from available evidence the police bodies decided to place him under arrest and, on the basis of the suggestion of the police, the state attorney's office functioning at the Dolj County Court issued a warrant for preventive arrest over a period of 30 days.

Investigations are still underway, concludes the communique issued by the press office of the Police General Inspectorate.

Union Leader Cites 'Dramatic Authority Crisis'

AU1602171794 Bucharest TINERETUL LIBER in Romanian 14 Feb 94 pp 1, 4

[Interview with Liviu Luca, president of the PETROM Independent Trade Unions Federation and vice president of the Fratia National Confederation of Romania's Free Trade Unions (CNSLR), by Liana Buligan on 11 February; place not given: "The Executive Power Is Experiencing a Dramatic Authority Crisis"]

[Excerpts] [Buligan] In your opinion, what is the actual position of our country's population following the intensification of the current economic and political crisis?

[Luca] There is an aspect that has to be pointed out to provide a correct answer. The population, that is the foundation of trade unions, is desperate and dumbfounded. At this point, no one in Romania understands anything—neither the people, nor the electorate, and not even the leaders of various parties involved in the political game. To quote just one example: In a country that is extracting 8 million tonnes of crude oil a year, the oil industry is suffering from financial blockage and is on the brink of bankruptcy. [passage omitted]

The disaster continues and no one seems to be responsible for what is happening. Thus all efforts go into the silly game of acquiring power and the problem of tangible solutions to justify this portfolio- and position-hunting is not posed.

[Buligan] What is the situation of financial blockage at this point?

[Luca] If you could have frank discussions with the big shots in industry you would be surprised to note that they are totally confused. No one knows who is his leader and what strategy or program he has to implement. On the one hand, the Vacaroiu government is accused by everyone, including us, the trade unions, of not doing anything; on the other hand, what can he do as long as he does not have the economic levers in his hand and has no freedom to make decisions?

[Buligan] Who is holding these economic levers?

[Luca] Under the law, the head of the State Property Fund [FPS] is the holder of these levers, while the executive, however, belongs to the prime minister. Under the Privatization Law, an illogical situation has emerged in which decisionmaking is divided in such a way between the FPS and government that neither can do anything. The situation is such that we do not even know for sure how many powers there are in the state, thus even the country's integrity is questioned. Consequently, the population is fed up to such an extent that they confuse democracy with the crisis and almost are expecting a reorganization of sociopolitical structures, even if this would mean a military dictatorship. At this time, such notions as freedom, democracy, and reform are compromised in Romania.

[Buligan] What is the explanation of the fact that recently trade unions firmly demanded a broad national coalition government, meaning that they got involved in "politics," as some public figures say?

[Luca] We demanded the participation of the democratic opposition in government for at least two reasons. First, an economic one. Under the current single leadership of the Social Democracy Party [PDSR], the former communist nomenklatura is consolidating its positions in the economy, thus becoming a very rich, though small, segment of, let's say, 5 percent. As for the rest, there is great poverty. A country with no prosperous middle class, but with catastrophic economic differences is not a stable country. Through the participation of the other parties in government, the segment of the privileged would expand and our society would become a normal society. [passage omitted]

Returning to the financial blockage, an easy solution would be if oil producers concluded their contracts directly with refineries; that would eliminate financial blockage. Despite all our efforts, however, this is not possible. In their naivete, the trade unions thought that this problem would belong to the competence of the Ministry of Industry and the prime minister, but we were wrong because these authorities have no decisionmaking power. Thus we have to ask the question: Which are the dark powers behind those appointed to govern? [passage omitted]

[Buligan] Is there any solution to this blockage?

[Luca] In the oil sector, the blockage amounts to 160 billion lei. Halting payments or, differently put, the application of the Bankruptcy Law is the only way out. Normally, such a financial blockage cannot last long; but maybe what is pursued is to exasperate people and ruin the economy in order to prove that Romania is unsuited for the market economy. [passage omitted]

[Buligan] Do you believe in the efficiency of a new government?

[Luca] No, because the country does not have the time needed to form and break in another government team.

[Buligan] Do you think that the legitimate power is experiencing an authority crisis?

[Luca] Yes, an authority crisis coupled with an outrageous lack of responsibility vis a vis national interests. The political forces have abandoned the nation, but the nation has also abandoned and isolated them in their silly game to win power. Thus, the country is split. [passage omitted]

[Buligan] What is your opinion about President Ion Iliescu in the current situation?

[Luca] His main asset is an outstanding resilience. At a recent meeting with trade union leaders, he emphasized the need for consensus through the participation of all in a government coalition, but, as you well know, even the road to hell is paved with good intentions.

[Buligan] What will the trade unions do next?

[Luca] We will continue to heed our responsibilities. [passage omitted] The problem of responsibility is a tangible and strict problem with us. [passage omitted]

'Seriously Injured' in Car Accident

AU1702200394 Bucharest TINERETUL LIBER in Romanian 15 Feb 94 p 1

[Liana Buligan item: "Liviu Luca, Vice President of the National Confederation of Romania's Free Trade Unions Fratia, Has Had a Serious Accident Following His Statements for Our Paper!"]

[Text] On Thursday evening, 11 February, Mr. Liviu Luca, vice president of the National Confederation of Romania's Free Trade Unions [CNSLR] Fratia, granted an exclusive interview to our newspaper by making serious accusations against the current government. Only two days later, a car accident occurred in which Liviu Luca was seriously injured, while the "offender," SRI [Romanian Intelligence Service] Lieutenant Colonel Ion Buica, died. Although the interview, which was granted confidentially in Mr. Luca's office, was published only on Monday, 14 February 1994, by TINERETUL LIBER, we ask ourselves to what extent his bold statements and the accident that was caused by a SRI officer were just an ordinary coincidence.

Serbs Accept Russian Proposal for Withdrawal

LD1702173294 Belgrade TANJUG Domestic Service in Serbo-Croatian 1711 GMT 17 Feb 94

[Text] Sarajevo, 17 Feb (TANJUG)—Srpska republic president Radovan Karadzic told journalists today that the Serb side has accepted a Russian initiative for the overcoming of the latest crisis around Sarajevo and expressed great gratitude to Russia.

Karadzic had two-hour talks with special Russian envoy for former Yugoslavia Vitaliy Churkin in Pale today. Following the talks, Churkin told journalists that in Belgrade today, before leaving for Pale, he received a letter from President Boris Yeltsin addressed to Milosevic and Karadzic; that is, the Serbian leaders and the Serbian people.

He said the letter presents Russia's stands, which are "in the interest of stopping the bloodshed."

"The Serbian side will have to remove all heavy artillery around Sarajevo," Churkin said and announced that the Russian Federation would prepare fresh troops to be dispatched to the Sarajevo area to take part in the peacekeeping operation.

This refers to 400 Russian soldiers who will be transfered to the Sarajevo area from within the Russian battalion currently deployed in the UN protected areas [in Croatia].

Karadzic: War 'Is Finally Over'

AU1702191494 Belgrade RTB Television Network in Serbo-Croatian 1830 GMT 17 Feb 94

[Statements by Vitaliy Churkin, deputy foreign minister of Russia, and Radovan Karadzic, leader of the Bosnian Serbs, at a news conference in Pale on 17 February; both statements are in English with superimposed Serbo-Croatian translation—recorded]

[Text] [Churkin] I have today brought to Belgrade and Pale a letter from President Yeltsin. This letter is addressed to President Milosevic, Dr. Karadzic, and other Serb leaders, as well as the Serbian people. It contains Russia's request that, in the interest of halting the bloodshed, the Serbian side withdraw its heavy weapons from Sarajevo.

In that context, the Russian Federation would be prepared to send its troops to the Sarajevo area to participate in the UN peace operation. I am glad to state that this Russian initiative, which we believe is in the interests of both the Muslims and the Serbs and all the people of Bosnia-Herzegovina, has been accepted by the Serbian side. We hope that the acceptance of the Russian initiative will put an end to the crisis around Sarajevo and we know that this will be a major step toward the overall settlement of the war in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

[Karadzic] I would like to say that we are very grateful to Russia for its involvement in the crisis. We have accepted the proposal put forward by Russia regarding the withdrawal of the heavy weapons. We also think that further Russian participation in the conference and the peace process will be welcomed and fruitful.

We are going to do what we will do on the basis of, first of all, the Russian demands, which for us mean certain guarantees, and then on the basis of our agreement with Mr. Akashi of 7 February and the Serbian-Muslim agreement of 9 February. We think that the war in Sarajevo is finally over.

Ganic Says Russians 'Not Welcome'

AU1702214294 Paris AFP in English 2125 GMT 17 Feb 94

[Text] Sarajevo, Feb 17 (AFP)—Russian troops are not neutral and are "not welcome" on the Bosnian Serb frontlines in Sarajevo, Bosnian Vice President Ejup Ganic said Thursday [17 February].

Ganic was asked for his reaction to Thursday's agreement for the Bosnian Serbs to withdraw heavy weaponry from Sarajevo, following Russian mediation. In return, the Russians are to send peacekeeping troops to Bosnia.

Ganic said: "The Russians are not neutral and have never agreed with NATO on the demilitarisation process of Sarajevo. Therefore, they are not welcome."

Ganic said that if the Russian troops were deployed in the Sarajevo region, he would prefer "to see them guarding Bosnian heavy weapons placed under UN control rather than Serb weapons."

The North Atlantic Treaty Organisation has threatened to bomb the Serb artillery from 2400 GMT Sunday if it were not withdrawn from around Sarajevo or put under control of the UN Protection Force (UNPROFOR).

The Bosnian army is mainly Moslem. The Russian government has come under domestic pressure to support the Serbs who are fellow Slavs and orthodox Christians.

Ganic added that the Russian initiative was "clumsy from a diplomatic point of view because it shows a lack of trust in the UNPROFOR", the UN Protection Force in former Yugoslavia.

Russian Foreign Minister Andrey Kozyrev, speaking in Athens on Thursday, said the Moslem side should now make concessions.

"The time has come for the West to prove that it knows how to do something better than an ultimatum, by encouraging the other side to undertake what we have obtained from the Serbs," he told journalists before holding talks with his German counterpart Klaus Kinkel.

Envoy to UN on Serb Intentions, Russian Troops

TA1802085494 Tel Aviv IDF Radio in Hebrew 0600 GMT 18 Feb 94

[Report on telephone interview with Bosnian UN Ambassador Muhamed Sacirbey at UN Headquarters in New York on 18 February by Itay Engel—recorded; Sacirbey speaks in English]

[Text] [Engel] Is there room for optimism with regard to the war in Bosnia-Herzegovina? We sought to clarify and elaborate on this matter with Bosnian UN Ambassador Muhamed Sacirbey. On the phone from New York this morning, we first asked him to tell us how he perceives and interprets Bosnian Serb leader Radovan Karadzic's evidently dramatic declaration that the war has come to an end.

[Sacirbey] These are the words of a man, of course, who has lied in the past and who has misrepresented the situation in the past. So, we will wait for his deeds rather than for his words.

[Engel] Sacirbey emphasized that he was not thrilled by the idea of deploying Russian troops on the hills surrounding Sarajevo, even if this results in a Serbian retreat.

[Sacirbey] As we know right now, there is growing Russian nationalism that now is gaining its expression through the Serbian fascism. We certainly do not welcome the presence of Russian troops overlooking the hills of Sarajevo. We were not consulted on this matter, and we should not accept it. Certainly, this would be akin to an invasion for us.

[Engel] At this point, Sacirbey quite skeptically referred to another positive development in Sarajevo over the past 24 hours: the surrender of Serbian weapons to UN troops.

[Sacirbey] While, in fact, the heavy weapons, at least some of them, may be withdrawn or placed under the control of the United Nations—the Serbian heavy weapons—it is important that the siege of Sarajevo be lifted. And as long as the Serbians continue to control the communications, the transportation lines in and out of Sarajevo, as long as they continue to control the electricity, the water, then I do not believe the siege is lifted.

[Engel] Finally, in view of his interpretation of the events and two days before the deadline on the ultimatum to end the Serbian siege of Sarajevo, we asked the Bosnian UN ambassador whether he believes air strikes by NATO troops are still the right thing to do.

[Sacirbey] Well, of course, we need to see if the heavy weapons are withdrawn, but it's my opinion that there are too many elements that are opposed to the air strikes at any cost and that the air strikes, I think, are sought to be avoided by any means, including the means of defining withdrawal and control of Serbian heavy weapons in such a way that it's so permissive that the Serbians....

[Engel] Sacirbey went on to say that some people are so convinced that such air strikes should be avoided at any cost that they are even persuading themselves that the Serbians are handing in their weapons to the United Nations and, consequently, are meeting the conditions imposed by the United Nations in a way that obviates the need for air strikes. Sacirbey said: I only hope that NATO and the West make sure that their demands are met in the field in an objective and genuine manner which at least coincides with the way I interpret terms such as cease-fire and withdrawal.

Serbs Threaten 'Massacre' of Foreigners

AU1802110494 Belgrade INTERVJU in Serbo-Croatian 18 Feb 94 p 6-9

[Interview with General-Major Manojlo Milovanovic, commander of the general staff of the army of the Srpska republic, by Slavoljub Kacarevic; place and date not given: "NATO Will Not Strike"]

[Excerpts] It is said of General-Major Manojlo Milovanovic, commander of the general staff of the army of the Srpska republic, that he is the mastermind of this army. This general, nicknamed "Mali" [Little] by his friends, caught our attention when (in the first half of February] he started negotiations in the name of the Serbian side and signed the agreement on cease-fire around Sarajevo. [passage omitted]

[Kacarevic] Mr. General, there is plenty of talk about air strikes. The Serbian side is supposed to meet the conditions set by NATO by 21 February. If these strike do materialize, what consequences will this have for the Serbian Army?

[Milovanovic] Nobody in the world wants the creation of a Muslim state in the Balkans. They want that the peoples in the Balkans exhaust themselves and decimate each other as much as possible so that they could accomplish their interests more easily. It is very well known who has what interests. For example, France has the strongest interest in the former Bosnia-Herzegovina, Germany in Croatia, and Turkey in the eastern parts, that is to say, the territory of Macedonia and Kosovo. However, nobody, perhaps with the exception of Turkey and individual Islamic countries, wants the creation of the Islamic state.

The West is constantly promising some sort of support to the Muslims to keep up their combat morale. The threat of air strikes is the best booster for Muslim morale. And all this has been going on for over a year. Not one of their politicians has made a statement without mentioning this possibility. In this way, they maintain the morale of the Muslim fighters. However, the realization of these air strikes is very complicated. First, it is difficult to differentiate the targets and specify what and whom to pound.

Second, the world has become very much involved in Bosnia through the UN Protection Force [UNPROFOR] and humanitarian organizations.

We are making it plain to everybody that if air strikes do take place all foreigners on the territory of the Srpska republic will become hostages. This also includes the representatives of the International Red Cross, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees [UNHCR], and, unfortunately, even journalists.... Therefore, gentlemen, go ahead and attack! This is one of our defense mechanisms. Furthermore, as of 1 March, they have been flying in our sky and recorded everything. They have probably also placed numerous radio tracers [radio lokator] on the ground, along the separating lines. However, their problem is that they know all our capabilities [sentence as published]. Earlier they did not know, for example, that we can follow them all over Europe, and especially in Italy where they are concentrating. In one combat raid, as we soldiers call it, we can decimate their first shock group, which would consist of some 50 to 60 aircraft. Not a single chief of a state whose air force is taking part in the attack would be able to justify this at home.

To become involved in such a war now would be a catastrophe, however not for Bosnia, which has already met its fate anyway, but for the entire world. Also, regardless of all their technical equipment, they could, according to our estimates, destroy 12 to 18 percent of our military hardware. This, however, would not eliminate our advantage in military hardware over the Muslims. The Muslims now live in 12 enclaves on the territory of former Bosnia. They are all entirely within the range of our arms. There are also UNPROFOR members in these enclaves and they know very well that a sort of massacre of international representatives would take place. We have no other choice, we must defend ourselves.

[Kacarevic] Mr. General, is the claim of the western media that the FRY Army is taking part in the combat on the Bosnian battlefields correct?

[Milovanovic] This claim has recently been used for propaganda purposes. The Western press has written extensively about this, however, when they have remained without sufficient proof, the matter was put off the agenda. The Yugoslav Army has not taken place in the operations on the territory of former Bosnia-Herzegovina since 19 May 1992. Regarding volunteers, they are always welcome. [passage omitted]

French Troops 'Sitting Ducks' in Air Strikes

AU1802100694 Paris AFP in English 0955 GMT 18 Feb 94

[Report by Michel Moutot]

[Text] Sarajevo, Feb 18 (AFP)—Three hundred UN French troops deployed among nine observations posts astride the frontlines on the hills overlooking Sarajevo could end up as sitting ducks if NATO starts bombing Serb positions.

The UN soldiers were deployed in their new observation posts following a ceasefire agreement signed by the Bosnian Serbs and Moslems, but the Serbs have since warned that they would retaliate against the UN soldiers if attacked by North Atlantic Treaty Organisation planes in the wake of its ultimatum that heavy weapons be withdrawn by Sunday night from around the besieged Bosnian capital.

"The day when someone, from whatever camp, decides to kill Blue Helmets, he will probably be able to do so easily," according to a senior UN Protection Force (UNPROFOR) officer who wished to remain anonymous.

"But this will be an act of war against the United Nations. He (the assailant) must know he will be taking big risks. A small (UN) group represents nothing by itself, but the balance of forces has recently changed in Bosnia. The air force is now here," he said.

Any guns that opened up on UN emplacements would have very little time before being spotted, attacked and destroyed, according to experts here.

"We have issued instructions in case a withdrawal is needed. But it is certain this would be delicate," another UNPROFOR officer said.

"We know that all our withdrawal routes can easily be cut. In case of air strikes, I think our men will remain in place. They are getting ready to protect themselves as best possible. There's no question of withdrawing them a few hours ahead (of an air strike), we would have to react after the event. In any case, we aren't kept informed of everything in the offing," he said.

In the snow and the cold which has dropped to minus 18 degrees Celsius (zero degrees Fahrenheit), French UNPROFOR soldiers are camping out among the trenches and minefields of the warring parties, knowing both sides hold them in their gunsights.

"It is certain that one doesn't take such action without risk," according to Lieutenant Colonel Richard Pernod.

"But in case of trouble, they (the soldiers) have their armoured vehicles to protect them and allow them to move out. And of course, we have planned the means to get them out if their positions become untenable," he added.

In one such observation post, at Dobrinja, 16 French soldiers have been deployed for the past eight days, exactly between the frontlines.

They have removed the mines from a few square meters (yards) of territory, between two rows of blackened buildings where Bosnian Serbs hold the left side of the street and Bosnian Moslem the right side.

Armed shadows sometimes briefly appear behind blown-out windows, while all entrances are mined. The two UN armoured vehicles and two small tents appear lost in the midst of the ruins.

In another observation post, at Vidikovac up on a hill, 17 soldiers are surrounded on three sides by Serb bunkers.

"We are going to build a shelter with bags of earth, beams and wooden planks we have brought with us," said Lieutenant Jean-Marie Pichouron.

But the frozen earth, under 50 centimeters (19 inches) of snow, does not lend itself easily to such work.

"The Serbs are very welcoming. They have invited us to dinner," one soldier said.

"They must say to themselves that while we are there, the planes will certainly not fire on them," he added.

UN Details Control Measures for Heavy Weapons

AU1702184094 Paris AFP in English 1817 GMT 17Feb 94

[Text] United Nations, Feb 17 (AFP)—UN Protection Forces (UNPROFOR) will rely on armed ground forces established at several sites to ensure control of Bosnian Serb weapons around Sarajevo, a UN spokesman said Thursday [17 February].

UN control "will be achieved through permanent, on the ground UNPROFOR armed presence on five or six established sites on each side where heavy weapons are regrouped," UN spokesman Ahmad Fawzi told reporters in New York.

"If either party attempts to retrieve those weapons it will have to use force and will therefore be in breach of the accepted conditions. Force will in turn be used against it," Fawzi said.

Serbian and Bosnian Moslem forces are due to withdraw their heavy weapons from a 20-kilometer (12-mile) radius of Sarajevo, or hand them over to UN control, by 0000 GMT Sunday or risk NATO airstrikes.

Bosnian Serbs said Thursday they would withdraw their heavy weaponry in time, following an intervention by Russian President Boris Yeltsin.

Reports 'Significant' Serb Withdrawal

AU1702204894 Paris AFP in English 2037 GMT 17 Feb 94

[Excerpts] Sarajevo, Feb 17 (AFP)—Bosnian Serb convoys carrying equipment and heavy weapons were seen quitting the hills around Sarajevo Thursday [12 February] in what military observers viewed as a "major, very significant" withdrawal, a spokesman said. [passage omitted]

"Today the UNMOs (military observers) gave us reports of very significant withdrawal of Serb forces of the hills around Sarajevo," UN Protection Force Lieutenant-Colonel Bill Aikman said.

"Up until now, the reports from the UNMOs have been of individual vehicles and pieces of equipment. Today, they're talking about convoys of equipment moving out of the hills," he added.

"A major, very significant withdrawal is going on," he said.

General Michael Rose, commander of the UN Protection Force (UNPROFOR) in Bosnia, "has received information from senior levels of the Bosnian Serb government that they will have their equipment out of a 20-kilometer (12-mile) zone within 36 hours, that means well before the deadline of midnight Sunday night," Aikman added.

Journalists in and around the capital however saw no immediate sign of the withdrawal.

There was no new activity at the Lukavica barracks, main headquarters of Serb forces in the Sarajevo suburbs. And armoured vehicles deployed along the front line in front of the barracks which had disappeared in the previous few days were again put into combat position Thursday. [passage omitted]

Aikman said UNPROFOR's contingent in Sarajevo was continuing to receive reinforcements and its staff now numbered 3,500 men, an increase of 500 in less than a week.

A British armoured unit consisting of 170 men, equipped with 14 Warrior tanks, was expected to arrive here from the central Bosnian town of Vitez on Friday. [passage omitted]

Karadzic: Heavy Weapons Under Control by 19 Feb

AU1802141894 Paris AFP in English 1410 GMT 18 Feb 94

[Text] Lukavica, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Feb 18 (AFP)—All heavy weapons around Sarajevo will be put under "efficient control" by Saturday midnight (2400 GMT), Bosnian Serb leader Radovan Karadzic said here Friday. Karadzic was speaking after talks with United Nations special envoy for the former Yugoslavia, Yasushi Akashi.

"We have been withdrawing already convoys and convoys, and we will withdraw even more," he said. "Those which can't be withdrawn because of snow will be placed under full effective control of the UN without any reservations."

"Tomorrow at 2400 regardless of other deadlines all heavy weapons will be under efficient control that is envisaged by UN regulations."

The North Atlantic Treaty Organisation has warned that if Serb weapons ringing Sarajevo are not withdrawn to a distance of 20 kilometres (12 miles) or put under UN control by Sunday midnight they will be attacked.

Akashi said that from Saturday armed troops of the UN Protection Force (UNPROFOR) will be controlling seven sites where heavy weapons will be grouped.

"There is a good momentum in full awareness that we have to make a very quick agreement," he added.

The heavy weapons on both Serb and Moslem side are being withdrawn or put under UNPROFOR control under an agreement concluded with the UN on February 9, the same day as NATO issued its ultimatum.

Weapons To Be Withdrawn to 7 Locations

LD1802153594 Belgrade TANJUG Domestic Service in Serbo-Croatian 1444 GMT 18 Feb 94

[Text] Lukavica, 18 Feb (TANJUG)—Republic of Srpska president Radovan Karadzic stated today following talks with the UN secretary general's special envoy for former Yugoslavia, Yasushi Akashi, that the Srpska army planned to withdraw its heavy artillery from around Sarajevo until midnight tomorrow [19 February].

"We have set a certain deadline and it is 2400 [2300 GMT] tomorrow, regardless of other deadlines," Karadzic said.

He added that the Srpska army had already withdrawn a number of convoys of heavy weapons and that they were still withdrawing. Those that cannot be withdrawn due to the snow will be under full UN control, Karadzic said.

"From noon tomorrow [1100 GMT 19 February], UN members will control seven locations where heavy weaponry will be assembled," Akashi told journalists.

This refers to five locations where the Serbs ought to assemble their artillery and two locations where the Muslims are to assemble theirs.

Commanders Agree on Control Sites

AU1802133094 Paris AFP in English 1318 GMT 18 Feb 94

[Text] Lukavica, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Feb 18 (AFP)—Bosnian Government and rebel Serb military commanders Friday agreed on three new control sites for grouping heavy weapons, said a UN spokesman who reaffirmed the threat of airstrikes if the NATO ultimatum was ignored.

Two sites for Serb heavy weapons and one for heavy artillery belonging to the Moslem-dominated Bosnian Army had been worked out, said UN Protection Force spokesman Lieutenant-Colonel Richard Pernod.

"It is a positive step but the three-day deadline is still valid and both parties have to be convinced of that and respect their undertakings. Otherwise there will be air strikes," said Pernod.

The North Atlantic Treaty Organisation ultimatum to Bosnian Serbs to withdraw heavy weapons from around Sarajevo expires Sunday at 2400 GMT.

"We expect other Serb convoys will leave the exclusion zone (around Sarajevo) today," he added, refering to the demand by NATO that heavy artillery be pulled back 20 kilometres (12 miles) from central Sarajevo or placed under UN supervision.

However, the new sites agreement had not yet been enforced, said Pernod, and no new weapons had been handed in.

The additional control sites for Serbs are at the villages of Blagovat and Saracevac, north of Sarajevo. Mokro and Vela, east of the capital and the Serb-held Lukavica barracks in the Sarajevo suburbs are already in use.

The Bosnian Army, currently using the downtown Marshall Tito barracks to canton its heavy guns, is to place weapons under UN supervision at Malo Polje, on Mount Igman, southwest of Sarajevo.

SDA Fears Redeployment of Weapons

AU1702162894 Sarajevo Radio Bosnia-Herzegovina Network in Serbo-Croatian 1400 GMT 17 Feb 94

[Edin Nuhic report]

[Excerpts] The main topic of the news conference held by the Party of Democratic Action [SDA] today was the current political situation and NATO's ultimatum to the aggressor. Journalists were addressed by party president Mirsad Ceman and Fuad Didic, member of the Main Committee. Edin Nuhic reports:

[Nuhic] We are a bit skeptical about what is going to happen after NATO's ultimatum expires. This was stated by SDA President Mirsad Ceman at a news conference today. Considering our experience so far, it is not realistic to expect the ultimatum to be fully complied with. What is also characteristic is that the aggressor is not behaving in line with the threat that was addressed to it.

On the other hand, the visit by numerous world politicians to Sarajevo and the busy diplomatic activities in the world indicate that there is a certain change in the international community's attitudes toward the Bosnia-Herzegovina crisis. The withdrawal of the weapons could, however, have some negative effects, Mirsad Ceman said.

[Begin Ceman recording] Regarding the lifting of the siege of Sarajevo, we would particularly like to express our fear that even if a more significant removal of heavy weapons deployed around Sarajevo took place, these

weapons could still be deployed on other fronts, above all, as this is becoming evident, to the Bihac region, and other regions where the aggressor is carrying out attacks. Thus, NATO's decision, whose purpose is to protect the (?unprotected) zones, would in fact be brutally dodged, in another area. [end recording]

[Nuhic] The message of the SDA to the political leadership of the country and the international community is to block the roads that lead from Sarajevo to other regions and in this way prevent the aggressor from deploying heavy weapons in other regions.

The ultimate aim of the SDA is not to provoke NATO air strikes, Fuad Didic, member of the party's Main Committee, said.

[Begin Didic recording] Our ultimate aim is to have the arms embargo lifted. Our ultimate aim is arms in our own hands. This means that our ultimate aim is to secure our survival. We have not survived as a nation so far because of agreements. We Bosnian Muslims have survived because of our armed resistance. [end recording] [passage omitted]

[Nuhic] At the end of today's news conference, the SDA representatives briefed the journalists on some details concerning the visit by [Presidency Member] Nijaz Durakovic to Australia. They said that they were told by the party members in the Australian branch of the SDA that, speaking at some rallies, Durakovic compared the SDA with the terrorist Serbian Democratic Party, saying, we quote, Adilbeg is saving Bosnia with his own means [not further specified].

It is unacceptable, Ceman said, that some members of opposition parties should be entering the preelection campaign in this way while SDA members are bleeding in defending Bosnia.

Serbs Withdraw 30 Artillery Pieces

LD1802130294 Belgrade TANJUG Domestic Service in Serbo-Croatian 1221 GMT 18 Feb 94

[Text] Lukavica, 18 Feb (TANJUG)—In accordance with the Russian initiative the Serb side today began withdrawal its heavy artillery around Sarajevo. A column of 30 pieces of heavy artillery started being withdrawn from Lukavica at 1300 [1200 GMT], a TANJUG correspondent in Lukavica reports.

"By order of the Supreme Command, the artillery pieces were collected and are being moved to certain locations and placed under control," [as received] Colonel Tadija Manojlovic, the commander of the Sarajevo-Romanija Corps artillery said. "The Serb side has done this in the interest of peace, and not in response to the NATO ultimatum," Manojlovic said.

Karadzic, UN Envoy Akashi Hold Talks

LD1802131894 Belgrade TANJUG Domestic Service in Serbo-Croatian 1214 GMT 18 Feb 94

[Text] Lukavica, 18 Feb (TANJUG)—Radovan Karadzic, president of the Srpska republic, and Yasushi Akashi, the UN secretary general's special envoy for former Yugoslavia, met in Lukavica today to discuss issues concerning the implementation the Russian initiative, the control and the withdrawal of Serb artillery, and the observance of the Sarajevo cease-fire.

Speaking at a news conference, Colonel Richard Pernod, head of the UNPROFOR [UN Protection Forces] Sarajevo sector press center, could not confirm that the Serb artillery had already begun withdrawing.

Asked what was happening on the territory of Sarajevo, Pernod explained that weaponry was being assembled, and expressed the hope that the Serb and the Muslim sides would begin withdrawing within the envisaged period.

He added that "convoys were being formed on the Serb side" in five locations: Lukavica, Mokro, Vela, Blagovat, and Saracevac. As regards the Muslim army, these locations are Malo Polje and Marshal Tito barracks.

Asked whether the Serb convoys would move in the next 24 hours, Pernod replied: "Naturally, the withdrawal should begin today, but so far I have no information." TANJUG has learned from Serb sources that more than 100 Serb artillery pieces on the territory of Sarajevo have already been put under control [as received], and that the handover of heavy artillery will be completed within the deadline agreed on with UN representatives.

Lukic: Civilians Not Threatened by Withdrawal

LD1802134994 Belgrade TANJUG Domestic Service in Serbo-Croatian 1229 GMT 18 Feb 94

[Text] Obrenovac, 18 Feb (TANJUG)—We are not abandoning Serb citizens in Sarajevo, nor are their lives in danger due to the withdrawal of a part of the heavy weaponry from a zone of 20 kilometers surrounding Sarajevo, the prime minister of the Srpska republic, Vladimir Lukic, has told Radio Obrenovac [local radio in Serbia].

Another part of the weaponry will be placed under UNPROFOR [UN Protection Forces] control; therefore, the reason for NATO air strikes no longer exists, prime minister Lukic said.

Replying to the question of when the Russian UNPROFOR soldiers could be expected to arrive in Sarajevo, Lukic did not specify the time but said that their deployment along frontlines would be an opportunity for the world finally to understand that it is not only one side—the Muslims—that care about peace.

Serbs Seize Strategic Bridge From UNPROFOR

AU1802154894 Paris AFP in English 1544 GMT 18 Feb 94

[Text] Zagreb, Feb 18 (AFP)—Serb separatists seized Friday [18 February] a strategic border bridge between Bosnia and Croatia from Nepalese troops of the UN Protection Force, UNPROFOR spokesman Lieutenant-Colonel Jean Marcotte said. Some 70 armed Serbs took over the bridge across the Sara river linking Stara Gradiska in southern Croatia to Bosanska Gradiska in northern Bosnia, Marcotte said.

The Nepalese were negotiating with the Serbs and had called for reinforcements from a Jordanian battalion, he added, but referred to the incident as "fairly minor" with no direct incidence on the war in Bosnia.

The spokesman was not able to say if the Serbs came from the self-proclaimed Krajina Republic in Croatia or the similar self-declared Serb Republic in Bosnia.

But the Croatian Serb news agency ISKRA monitored in Belgrade said the bridge had been seized by a unit of Krajina's "special police."

It said the bridge was a "means of UNPROFOR pressure on the Serbian people of Western Slavonia (in north-central Croatia)" and quoted the head of the "special police," Krsto Zekovic, as saying that his men would take over all points on the border between the two self-proclaimed Serbian republics guarded by UN troops.

Serbs Target NATO Aircraft, Use New Shell

AU1702152994

[Editorial Report] Sarajevo Radio Bosnia-Herzegovina Network in Serbo-Croatian at 1400 GMT on 17 February carries within its regular 45-minute newscast several reports on the combat situation in the republic and in Sarajevo.

According to a correspondent in the operational zone of the 7th South Operational Group, "the chetniks have started fierce tank and infantry attacks in the Filipovici region. These attacks have been going on for four days." He also says that in a "powerful counterattack, the fighters from this region destroyed yet another tank. Several dozens of chetniks have been put out of action. A number of infantry and antitank weapons were captured. This was the 77th enemy tank to have been destroyed in this region."

Brcko correspondents Hamiz Deronjic and Nihad Salikovic report that "continuous shelling of our positions has been going since this morning. The fiercest attacks are being launched by the enemy on the area between Omerbegovaca and Vranovaca. The chetniks are using mortars, of 155-mm and 122-mm howitzers, tanks, hill guns, portable mortars, and [word indistinct]. Double charge shells are being used increasingly frequently. The Brcko defense positions have been attacked for the first time with shells that explode about 10 meters above the ground. There are indications that this kind of shell was used by the aggressor for the massacre of civilians at the Sarajevo market [on 5 February]."

According to a reporter from the Information Service of the First Army Corps in Sarajevo, the "chetniks are continuing to violate the cease-fire in some parts of Sarajevo today. This started early this morning when they targeted NATO aircraft with illuminating [svetleci] bullets from Nedzarici. Then they fired mortar shells from Decija Glava and also used portable mortars to attack Hladivode from Gradina. Chetnik snipers have again been active, especially from Vraca, and they are using silencers so citizens are warned to exercise the maximum caution."

Continued Serbian Aggression Around Bihac

AU1802122094 Sarajevo Radio Bosnia-Herzegovina Network in Serbo-Croatian 1100 GMT 18 Feb 94

[Report by Mirza Sadikovic from Bihac]

[Text] The Serbian aggressor has continued the artillery-tank attacks on the defense lines running from the Grmusko-Srbljanski plateau, via Vasino Brdo, to the army barracks in Grabez.

In the course of the night and this morning they attempted new infantry breakthroughs, which our defenders thwarted heroically.

[Word indistinct] in the course of the night the intensity of the shelling [words indistinct] was reduced somewhat. It has been intensified this morning, especially at the time that we are reporting this.

After a tenacious counterattack by the members of the 5th Corps against the remainder of the para-army [words indistinct] a new break and end of hostilities. [Words indistinct] separating lines in this period was a little more peaceful.

Yesterday's [words indistinct] Bosanska Krupa. In front and [word indistinct] international community [words indistinct].

Serbs Shell Civilian Targets in Doboj, Olovo

AU1702122094

[Editorial Report] Sarajevo Radio Bosnia-Herzegovina Network in Serbo-Croatian at 1100 GMT on 17 February carries in its regular 19-minute newscast two reports on the fighting in the republic.

Doboj correspondent Mirudin Aldobasic reports on the situation in the 7-South Operative group operational zone, and says that "this morning the area of Tesanj came under attack, particularly (?Mrkovcici) and Sije. Despite the low temperatures, the Chetniks shelled the villages using tanks, [word indistinct], and 82-mm and

120-mm mortars. Everything implies that the enemy will continue the attacks during the day, particularly along the [word indistinct] communication Doboj-Teslic."

Velid Djindo, the Olovo correspondent, reports that "this morning from 0530 [0430 GMT] to 0630, the districts on the southern access points of Olovo were again exposed to fierce howitzer fire. We still have no information on the consequences of the latest bombardment of civilian targets. As I am filing this report, just after 0900, enemy antiaircraft machine gun, antiaircraft gun, and small arms' fire can be heard along the southern parts of the front."

Muslims Boycott Tripartite Commission Meeting

LD1702131194 Belgrade TANJUG Domestic Service in Serbo-Croatian 1157 GMT 17 Feb 94

[Text] Zvornik, 17 Feb (TANJUG)—Major General Manojlo Milovanovic, chief of general staff of the army of the Serb Republic [in Bosnia-Herzegovina], told TANJUG today that the Sarajevo cease-fire agreement is mainly being observed, but that the Muslim side has called into question an important part of the agreement, which was reached at Sarajevo Airport on 9 February.

This morning, without any explanation, the Muslim side refused to send its representatives to participate in the continuation of the work of a tripartite commission, which has already shown results, Milovanovic said. The task of the commission, made up of representatives of the Serb and the Muslim sides and UNPROFOR [UN Protection Forces] officers, is to draw up a solution for the control of the cease-fire.

The commission should have reached practical solutions on the basis of a direct insight into the situation in the field, which for the most part has been done, between 10 February and today, Gen. Milovanovic explained.

Due to the discontinuation of the work of the joint commission, it is necessary to hold a meeting as early as today between Serb and Muslim corps commanders and UNPROFOR troops in Sarajevo, Milovanovic said.

He added that by hampering the work of the tripartite commission the Muslim side has shown how much importance it attaches to the control and observance of the cease-fire in the Sarajevo area.

RSK, Srpska Leaders Meet, Show 'Solidarity'

LD1702182894 Belgrade TANJUG Domestic Service in Serbo-Croatian 1741 GMT 17 Feb 94

[Excerpt] Sarajevo, 17 Feb (TANJUG)—The president of the Srpska republic, Radovan Karadzic, said today after a meeting with Milan Martic, president of the republic of Serb Krajina [RSK], that Martic's visit "demonstrated solidarity of the people of the RSK with their brothers in the Srpska republic."

Martic was received in Pale with all state honors, and all aspects of cooperation, particularly military, were discussed in his lengthy talks with Karadzic.

"Our talks were very useful and in the interest of our people. We discussed military cooperation in particular," Martic told journalists, pointing out that he would not want this to be understood as a threat, "because we are one people and it is only natural that we cooperate with the aim of defending our territories." [passage omitted]

Herceg-Bosna Official: Boban Still 'President'

LD1702230994 Zagreb HTV Television in Serbo-Croatian 2215 GMT 17 Feb 94

[Interview with Kresimir Zubak, president of the Croat republic of Herceg-Bosna Presidential Council, with unidentified correspondent; Zubak is in studio in Siroki Brijeg, Bosnia, the correspondent is in the Zagreb studio—live]

[Excerpt] [passage omitted] [Correspondent] The extraordinary session ended around 2100 this evening. As we have heard, there was a lot of talk about the role of the Presidential Council. What was so controversial?

[Zubak] You see, deputies were unclear about two issues. The first one was whether this abolishes the position of president of the republic. The second was who was to appoint members of the Presidential Council. Both issues have been clarified.

The proposed amendment to the fundamental decision on the establishing of the Croat republic of Herceg-Bosna specifies that the position of president of the republic still exists, but that a new body—the Presidential Council—is introduced. Concerning the appointment of president of the republic, it was clearly stated that the Presidential Council appoints the president of the republic, and that the Chamber of Deputies verifies the appointment.

[Correspondent] Perhaps we should specify what the status of Mate Boban is now.

[Zubak] At a session of the Chamber of Deputies in Livno on 8 February, Mate Boban put his mandate into the hands of the deputies of the Chamber of Deputies. In connection with that, at today's session the Chamber of Deputies decided that there were extraordinary circumstances and that during extraordinary circumstances the Presidential Council takes over the functions of president of the republic. Therefore, the post of president of the republic still exists, and Mate Boban, who has held that post so far, still remains the president of the republic, but with the status that I have just specified. [passage omitted]

Council Leader To Carry Out Duties

LD1702184394 Zagreb Radio Croatia Network in Serbo-Croatian 1800 GMT 17 Feb 94

[Excerpts] At a session in Mostar, the Chamber of Deputies of the Croat Republic of Herceg-Bosna set up a presidential council and passed a decision that the presidential council would carry out duties and obligations of the president of the Croat Republic of Herceg-Bosna. Kresimir Zubak has been appointed president of the 11-member presidential council. Zdenko Vranjes reporting from Mostar.

Thanking the deputies for their trust, Kresimir Zubak said that the presidential council had a great task ahead in defending the rights and interests of the Croat people in Bosnia-Herzegovina, who must have the same position in Bosnia-Herzegovina as the other two nations. We are still determined to solve the crisis in Bosnia-Herzegovina by peaceful means, and we accept all initiatives leading to this, Zubak said.

Other members of the presidential council are Ivan Bender, Pero Markovic, Ivo Zivkovic, Branimir Huterer, Jadranko Prlic, Jozo Martinovic, Valentin Coric, Mile Akmadzic, Ante Roso, and Ivo Lozancic. Vladislav Pogarcic was elected the council's secretary. [passage omitted]

The deputies are currently discussing a gathering of Croats held in Sarajevo recently, and the deputies have distanced themselves from the documents adopted at the meeting. They said that this group of Croats had no right to represent the interests of the Croat people in Bosnia-Herzegovina, and that the documents adopted at the meeting in Sarajevo do not reflect the aspirations and interests of the Croats of Bosnia-Herzegovina.

Zubak Leads Presidential Council

LD1702221394 Zagreb Radio Croatia Network in Serbo-Croatian 2100 GMT 17 Feb 94

[Text] The newly elected president of the presidential council of the Croat Republic of Herzeg-Bosna, Kresimir Zubak, will head the Bosnian Croat delegation in the next round of Geneva talks early next month. Members of the negotiating delegation will be elected by the Chamber of Deputies or some other body in the Croat Republic of Herzeg-Bosna.

The newly elected president of the Presidential Council of Herzeg-Bosna informed the deputies about the current situation at the Geneva peace negotiations. He said that certain new initiatives on the set-up of Bosnia-Herzegovina had been presented in Geneva, but added that it was too early to discuss them. However, the new initiatives refer to the involvement of the United States into the solving of the crisis in Bosnia-Herzegovina and to NATO's decision to bomb Serb positions around Sarajevo if the Serbs do not withdraw their weapons.

Croat Assembly Declares Unilateral Cease-Fire

LD1702214194 Zagreb Radio Croatia Network in Serbo-Croatian 2100 GMT 17 Feb 94

[Excerpts] At the end of its session in Mostar this evening, the Chamber of Deputies of the Croat republic of Herceg-Bosna passed a decision on a unilateral cease-fire and truce in Mostar for the next 15 days. [passage omitted]

At the proposal of Defense Minister Perica Jukic, the Chamber of Deputies passed a decision on a unilateral cease-fire and truce in the Mostar area for a period of 15 days. The Presidential Council, the Defense Ministry, and the HVO [Croatian Defense Council] main headquarters were charged with implementing this decision, which specifies that the HVO is allowed to open fire only in self defense.

The Chamber of Deputies also passed a decision to open an office of the Croat republic of Herceg-Bosna to take care of all issues relating to the rights and status of Croats. The office will be located in Pale and also in Banja Luka, Tuzla, and Sarajevo. [passage omitted]

Ambassador to Tehran Interviewed on Bosnia

NC1702083994 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 0430 GMT 17 Feb 94

[Report on an interview with Ambassador Omar Bahman of Bosnia-Herzegovina by correspondent Qoroqi in Tehran on 17 February—recorded]

[Text] In an interview with the Central News Unit, Omar Bahman, ambassador from the Republic of Bosnia-Herzegovina, described the situation in Bosnia as extremely disturbing and called on international forums and especially on Islamic countries to adopt a serious decision.

[Begin recording of Omar Bahman in unidentified language with superimposed correspondent's report in Persian] Referring to recent NATO decisions for air operations in Bosnia, he said: This decision should have been made a long time ago. The situation in Bosnia has now reached such a stage that such temporary steps—even though positive—cannot solve the Bosnian people's problem.

Criticizing UN actions in Sarajevo and referring to the general disarmament in the city, Omar Bahman said: If this decision is carried out justly, it can be useful. But past experience shows that this step by the United Nations also serves the objectives of the Serbs and that in the long run only the Muslims will be disarmed since the Serbs can re-arm themselves with the support that they have.

The Bosnian ambassador in Tehran also described the West's political pressure to accept the peace plan as futile, and said: The Bosnian people are no longer fooled by the West's false slogans.

Continuing, Omar Bahman strongly criticized France and Russia and accused them of conveying the secret decisions adopted by NATO and the Security Council to the Serbs. [end recording]

UN To Suspend Overland Aid Convoys Until 22 Feb

AU1802155294 Paris AFP in English 1541 GMT 18 Feb 94

[Excerpts] Geneva, Feb 18 (AFP)—All overland aid convoys into Bosnia will be suspended Sunday and Monday [20-21 February], UN relief officials said here Friday, amid continuing uncertainty over a NATO ultimatum threatening air strikes.

"Most convoys will return to base tomorrow evening and should be moving again on Tuesday," said UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) spokeswoman Sylvana Foa.

The decision would be reviewed Saturday morning, then again Sunday in light of the latest developments on the NATO ultimatum, which threatens air strikes if the two warring factions have not demilitarized Sarajevo by midnight Sunday.

She said it was taken both to avoid any needless risks over the NATO warning and because some of the UN units based along corridors used by UNHCR vehicles had been temporarily redeployed closer to Sarajevo. [passage omitted]

On Friday, aid convoys headed to the cities of Mostar in the south and Zenica in central Bosnia. Another convoy also set out for Maglaj, northwest of Sarajevo, which has only seen one convoy since last October, she said.

On Wednesday, a UNHCR convoy managed to get into the besieged Moslem enclave of Srebrenica, where a Canadian UN battalion is blocked as Bosnian Serbs forces have refused to allow its replacement by Dutch UN troops.

Foa stressed that the situation in several cities remained desperate, such as in Mostar, Gorazde and Maglaj where the everyday life of residents was much more difficult than for those in Sarajevo.

Most people in these locations "are living like rats in sewers."

"People could be fed if there were enough movement on the ground," Foa said, saying the UNHCR would like to see commercial traffic being resumed.

Humanitarian Airdrops Continuing

AU1802140194 Paris AFP in English 1354 GMT 18 Feb 94

[Text] Frankfurt, Germany, Feb 18 (AFP)—Airdrops of emergency aid to the besieged Moslem enclaves in eastern Bosnia are continuing despite the threat of air strikes against Serb artillery around Sarajevo, a spokesman for the operation "Provide Promise" said Friday.

"Our operations haven't changed. We are continuing until the UN makes a decision otherwise," a spokesman at the Rhein-Main airbase said.

During Thursday night 11 planes dropped 78 tonnes of food, 2.5 tonnes of medical supplies and just under six tonnes of clothing and blankets, Airman Stuart Camp said.

Since the start of the operation on Feruary 27, 1993, US, French and German transporter planes have dropped some 16,700 tonnes of food, medical aid and winter supplies, he said.

Ten Victims of Exposure, Starvation in Maglaj Area

AU1802151694 Sarajevo Radio Bosnia-Herzegovina Network in Serbo-Croatian 1400 GMT 18 Feb 94

[Text] The republican Health Service Headquarters reports that 10 people have died from exposure and starvation in the past two days in the area of Maglaj. Aid in food, medicine, dressings, fuel, winter clothing and footwear are most needed in Gornji Vakuf, Bihac, Maglaj, Tesanj, Jablanica, Mostar, Zepa, and Gorazde.

NATO, UN Peacekeepers Agree on Weapons

AU1702142394 Paris AFP in English 1412 GMT 17 Feb 94

[By Milan Dragovic]

[Text] Zagreb, Feb 17 (AFP)—NATO and UN officials meeting here Thursday said they "agreed" on control of heavy weapons around Sarajevo, in a bid to dispel reported differences on how to implement NATO's threat to bomb Bosnian Serb weapons still pointed at the Bosnian capital on Monday.

The meeting involved U.S. General George Joulwan, who is both NATO's supreme commander in Europe as well as commander of U.S. forces in Europe, special UN envoy Yasushi Akashi of Japan, French General Jean Cot, the commander of UN forces in former Yugoslavia (UNPROFOR), and British General Charles Ritchie, the force's chief of staff.

Questioned by journalists afterwards, Akashi said the alleged differences have "never existed, except in some media reports."

"I gave to General Joulwan what our conception and definition of control is," he said.

Joulwan backed this up, adding: "We are in agreement on the definition of control."

Their meeting was called to define exactly what the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and the United Nations consider acceptable concessions by the Bosnian Serbs on their weapons besieging the capital.

The meeting came three days ahead of a NATO ultimatum to Bosnia's warring parties—primarily the Serbs—to withdraw their weapons from around Sarajevo or place them under UN control by midnight Sunday. Failing this, they will be bombed.

In Brussels Wednesday, NATO and UN officials also moved to close ranks to dispel reports of differences over the definition of "control" and to warn there was nothing ambiguous about the ultimatum issued on February 9.

Joulwan is also to meet U.S. Admiral Jeremy Boorda, the commander of allied forces for southern Europe (AFSOUTH), NATO headquarters in Brussels said.

Boorda has been working closely with Cot for months, traveling to Zagreb three times in the last week.

"All possible plans, mechanisms and scenarios have been ready for a while now" for any possible air strikes in Bosnia, a UN military source told AFP.

The source said any mechanism to ensure no more shelling of Sarajevo—and thus avoid air strikes—was "very complicated, and even harder to implement since it must be accepted by all the parties," in a 22-month-old conflict where all attempts at resolving crises have broken down.

In Sarajevo, UNPROFOR spokesman Bill Aikman said there had been a "significant number" of Bosnian Serb weapons regrouped in UN-controlled zones, but said the Serbs appeared to be opting more for "withdrawal from the area" outside the 20-kilometer (12-mile) exclusion zone set by NATO.

By Tuesday, Bosnian Serbs had regrouped 36 pieces in two of their barracks under the guard of unarmed UN military observers and on Wednesday placed 20 additional heavy weapons under UN control, but without moving them from their firing sites, according to a senior UNPROFOR officer.

But he said these weapons had only been registered with the UN, and not dismantled, in a procedure which observers said was not exactly in line with UNPROFOR statements last Wednesday specifying they must be put under armed UN guard.

UN spokesmen on the ground however expressed optimism, including Peter MacFarlane in Sarajevo who said Thursday the "process continues and at this stage those involved are satisfied."

In Sarajevo, UNPROFOR commander for Bosnia General Sir Michael Rose on Thursday also told the press "both parties continue to cooperate in fulfilling the conditions of the agreement."

He said the "essence" of UNPROFOR control over weapons was "that if either party wishes to get their weapons back, force will be used against them."

In The Hague, an official spokesman said the Dutch, U.S. and British defense ministers would meet Sunday in Italy—where NATO warplanes are based—at the request of U.S. Defense Secretary William Perry to discuss Bosnia.

RSK Leader Cited on UNPROFOR Departure

LD1702203794 Belgrade TANJUG in English 1808 GMT 17 Feb 94

["Pool" item]

[Text] Vukovar, Feb 17 (TANJUG)—The deputy defense minister of the Republic of Serb Krajina (R.S.K.) Milan Milanovic Thursday warned UNPROFOR [UN Protection Forces] of possible undesirable consequences if parts of Russian and Belgian battalions leave the eastern UNPA [UN protected areas] sector for Sarajevo.

If that happens, Milanovic warned Commander Jean Cot, the situation in eastern Slavonia, Baranja and western Srem will be very difficult as no one will be left to ensure the disengagement of the R.S.K. (Serb state in Croatia) forces and the Croatian Army, which

was precisely the reason why the two battalions had come to the eastern sector.

It could also happen that the population will prevent the departure of U.N. troops, Milanovic said, adding he also believed it would be better if they remained where they are now.

The UNPROFOR commander for Bosnia-Herzegovina British General Sir Michael Rose has asked for additional 3,000 troops to control the demilitarization of the 20 km exclusion zone around Sarajevo, capital of the war-torn former Yugoslav Republic of Bosnia-Herzegovina, neighboring on the eastern UNPA sector.

According to the eastern sector information service, French General Cot, whose headquarters are based in Croatia's capital Zagreb, is expected to arrive in Erdut on March 1 for a farewell visit to the area before handing over his duties to a successor.

Government Protests Greek Trade Embargo

AU1702134194 Skopje NOVA MAKEDONIJA in Macedonian 17 Feb 94 p 2

[Statement issued by the "Government of the Republic of Macedonia" after the closure of the Greek border with Macedonia, place and date not given: "Measures Contrary to the United Nations and the CSCE"]

[Text] "The Government of the Republic of Macedonia evaluates the newest resolution of the Government of the Republic of Greece, by which the activities of the Consulate of the Republic of Greece in Skopje and the trade of goods 'from and to Skopje from the port of Salonika' are stopped, as an embargo against our country, as an act contrary to the regulations of the UN Charter, the CSCE documents, and International Law. By this act, the Greek side showed disrespect for the decision of the EC European Council at the Edinburgh Summit of 12 December 1992, according to which our country must be allowed a regular oil supply. Such unilateral and unacceptable measures applied by the Greek Government are of special concern because they are contrary to the UN Security Council resolution by which Macedonia and Greece are committed to overcome their differences through negotiations, with the mediation of the United Nations, and thus contribute to the promotion of peace and stability in the region.

"The Republic of Macedonia had, and still has, a peaceful position regarding all events on the territory of former Yugoslavia, it is outside the war, and it has done its best to construct a democratic society and a market economy, to settle interethnic relations through dialogue and tolerance. As far as the dispute with Greece is concerned, it has demonstrated maximum flexibility and good will in solving the outstanding questions. This Macedonian attitude is known to the whole world. Macedonia succeeded in maintaining peace and stability in the country, thus becoming a factor of peace and stability in the region.

"Therefore, at a time when the international community is involving great efforts for a peaceful and agreed solution of the most complicated problem, the stopping of the war in Bosnia included, it is a puzzle that Greece, a member of the United Nations, the CSCE, NATO, the European Council, and now current chairman of the European Union, undertakes such measures against our independent and peaceful country, contrary to International Law. The Greek Government is introducing them with the goal of applying economic, political, and other pressures against our country, using the fact that our country has no exit to the sea.

"The Government of the Republic of Macedonia wishes to emphasize that great damage is being done to the lasting interests of the two countries and peoples, as well as to future mutual relations and cooperation, for which Greece is responsible. Contrary to that, Macedonia remains firm in its determination for good relations with all its neighbors, including its southern neighbor, and it is ready to resume the Macedonian-Greek dialogue.

"The Government of the Republic of Macedonia will cautiously observe all the possible consequences of the Greek blockade, which has in no way been caused by the Macedonian side, and it will undertake all necessary measures and activities on the international plan in that regard."

Border Closure, Trade Ban Assessed

AU1702144394 Skopje NOVA MAKEDONIJA in Macedonian 17 Feb 94 p 2

[Commentary by Zoran Andonovski: "Athens' Last 'Trump'"]

[Text] Andreas Papandreou has once again shown that he can surprise us, but unfortunately, this time it was an unpleasant surprise. The resolution of the Greek Government that put a stop to the Greek Consulate's activities in Skopje and blocked the trade of goods from the port of Salonika has certainly indicated that after assuming, more or less, the role of observer the past few months, Greece decided this was the proper time to flex its muscles—by using the only trumps it has against Macedonia. Of course, we here exclude the possibility of a military threat (after closing the border and withdrawing the diplomats, practically the only thing that can follow is a proclamation of war) and, at least for now, nobody even thinks this is in Papandreou's bag of surprises. Greece has embarked on a course of either losing it all or getting it all, evidently figuring it will get it "all," which can be interpreted as "accomplishing a change in the flag and correction of the Constitution."

To Macedonia's constant efforts to reach out, Athens replied in a manner totally inconsistent with the proclaimed stance that "Greece is interested in having a stable and independent country on its northern border." It is also inconsistent with the norms of interstate relations.

It is impossible to believe that Papandreou has ignored the fact that he is undertaking such an action during Greece's tenure of the chairmanship the European Union, with all the attendant consequences and blights to its reputation, which will be even more affected now. It is also improbable that Papandreou has not taken into account the statement made by German Spokesman Vogel, who said after the first Greek threats that Greece could not close the border with Macedonia because it was not its own but that of the European Union.

Why did Athens, in the middle of this seemingly unfavorable situation for itself, decide to take this step? There are only two possible explanations. It is either a desperate attempt on the part of the insulted, who had expected some concessions on the eve of U.S. recognition, or Papandreou knows a lot!

Let us imagine a hypothetical situation in which, for instance, Macedonia and Greece are prepared, or have agreed, to make a barter agreement: Greece will "get" the flag and the correction of the Constitution by adopting the minority rights article from their constitution; in return, Macedonia will be recognized by the United States and Greece will not veto its admission to the CSCE. If that is correct, then Papandreou's move can be seen as a kind of blackmail of the Macedonian Government, pressuring it to fulfill its part in the disputed questions without previous negotiations.

And there is more to it. Right or wrong, Athens considers itself outwitted by Macedonia and President Gligorov, whom they consider to be the personification of Macedonian policy. Is this not a "thug's" reply by the unpredictable head of the Greek government, who is giving the ball back to Gligorov when the latter's hands are practically tied with the closure of the border, even if he wanted to make a "gesture of good will." If he does not relent—the problem will remain, with greater shame and degradation for Greece's reputation in the eyes of the international public. If Gligorov relents—he himself will be accused of surrendering to Greek pressure, which could engender unpredictable internal political complications. All this written down on paper may look like yet another example of the Balkan inclination to overanalyze things, however, taking into consideration the twists in the dispute thus far, it is not unlikely that Papandreou will try to absolve himself, preparing a "trap for Gligorov" at the same time. If we read the essential part of his statement, we once again see the same hypocrisy as usual. Papandreou said: "So far, Skopje has made absolutely no effort to demonstrate its wisdom and moderation," which is a blatant lie. To begin with, Macedonia uses every possible opportunity to call for discussions on "all outstanding questions." Macedonia continually reiterates its readiness to sign an agreement on respecting borders, friendship, goodneighborly relations, and cooperation....

Has Athens officially asked itself how it looks when someone is constantly demanding something, without an expression of good will or the offer of anything in return. We have yet to note a Greek gesture of rapprochement.

It would be difficult to minimize the closing of the borders, but it shouldn't be exaggerated, either. We say—closing of the border, not—"a halt to the trade of goods from the Port of Salonika" (as Papandreou whimsically referred to it, avoiding the unpopular phrase), because that is essentially what has been going on since yesterday. If the Greek Consulate is closed down there are no visas, and if there are no visas, nobody can cross the border. If trade is not allowed from Salonika, it means that fuel and all trade from Greece will dry out. Nevertheless, on the other hand, one should not overestimate the effect because it would appear that Macedonia has enough fuel reserves right now.

To its constant efforts to reach out to its southern neighbor, Macedonia has experienced a truly incredible reply, outside the realm of good behavior....

Federal

Assembly Thanks Russian Duma for 'Concern'

LD1702193094 Belgrade TANJUG in English 1559 GMT 17 Feb 94

[Text] Belgrade, February 17 (TANJUG)—Representatives of the parliment of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (F.R.Y.) "most warmly" on Thursday thanked the Russian colleagues for a statement of Duma, the lower house of the Russian parliament, which stated concern over the discussions at NATO about the possibility of air strikes on the targets on the territory of the former Yugoslavia.

A telegram expressing thanks was, on behalf of the parliament, sent by speakers of the parliament chambers Radoman Bozovic and Milos Radulovic to their Russian counter-parts, Vladimir Shumeyko and Ivan Ribkin.

The U.N. Security Council in late May 1992 imposed comprehensive and binding sanctions against the F.R.Y. over its alleged involvement in the war of local Serbs, Croats and Moslems in the neighboring, former Yugoslav republic of Bosnia-Herzegovina.

NATO threatened on February 9 to carry out air strikes on positions of the Bosnian Serbs and Moslems, who clashed around Sarajevo unless by Sunday midnight (GMT) heavy weapons were not withdrawn to a distance of 20 kilometers from the center of the city or placed under U.N. control.

We are convinced that the appeal of your esteemed parliament for a peaceful settlement of the crisis, lifting of the unjust and inhuman sanctions and reintegration of the F.R.Y. into the world community would be inspiring for friendly Russia to persevere in such initiatives at the U.N. Security Council and that this would mobilize all the justice-loving countries to implement this idea, the telegram said.

The solidarity of Duma with the Serbian people "at exceptionally difficult circumstance" was assessed in the telegram as "more than mere encouragement", that is, "as a confirmation of the fact that the Serbian people, in its just resistance to outside pressures, has in the Russian people a true friend and full understanding and support."

Serbia

Milosevic Thanks Yeltsin for Sarajevo Stance

LD1702172394 Belgrade TANJUG Domestic Service in Serbo-Croatian 1643 GMT 17 Feb 94

[Text] Belgrade, 17 February (TANJUG)—This morning Serbian President Slobodan Milosevic received Vitaly Churkin, Russian deputy foreign minister and the Russian president's special envoy, who delivered a letter from President Boris Yeltsin.

The Serbian president's office has announced that they discussed the current situation in former Bosnia-Herzegovina, especially the crisis concerning Sarajevo, which is obstructing the peace process. They decided that steps should be taken to discourage the supporters of the war option and encourage the forces of peace in solving the crisis. The calming of war tensions in the Sarajevo area is undoubtedly of great importance for ending the conflict.

President Milosevic asked Vitaly Churkin to convey his greetings to Russian President Boris Yeltsin, whom he thanks for the assistance given in overcoming the greatest crisis so far in the peace process and in reducing the danger of the war escalating.

Commentary on Consequences, Reasons for Threat

AU1702143694 Belgrade POLITIKA in Serbo-Croatian 13 Feb 94 p 7

[Commentary by Ljubodrag Stojadinovic: "The Fourteenth Threat"]

[Text] If our count is correct, this is the fourteenth threat to the Serbs that bombs will finally start falling on them. The situation is much too serious to allow for the counting to continue as a type of inventory of modern military senselessness. At the same time, it is hard to believe that the operation will really commence, even if complete agreement were reached among those who carry the entire risk of deciding to go ahead with an operation that could be a prelude to a great catastrophe.

It is precisely in the mechanisms of decisionmaking and communicating decisions, in the ways of understanding authority, superiority, and operational finalization, that confusion and systemic indecision reign supreme. All this could lead to more confusion and great dangers. The mechanism has certainly been constructed with the intention of being full of dangerous "loopholes," in which procedural steps get lost, and big decisions are made contrary to the norms of behavior. So it has happened that NATO has slowly, but quite convincingly, become superior to the United Nations and has managed to impose on Mr. Butrus-Ghali the insulting and somewhat rusty institution of the ultimatum to the Serbs.

The time allotted for fulfilling the conditions is ticking away. If nothing changes, if there is no drama in the hour glass of the great crisis and NATO's dangerous experiment, time will run out on 21 February. For whom? What will happen then? What will happen afterwards?

These are the questions asked most often, both by serious analysts and the worried world at large, and they all fail to get an answer because it really does not exist. The ones who are most passionate about dropping bombs are the most shortsighted ones. If it were not so, they would soon get over this desire.

Even NATO operatives, and the headquarters of Italian General Boorda [as published], cannot envision what to

do after the first decisive step. For example, a "small" series of air strikes are carried out against the positions and [artillery] pieces that for some reason were not moved in time. And then what? Chasing gunners around the mountains is a painstaking job, which—based on the customary habits of the group that delights in the easy job of hitting large targets—means that the planes would then turn toward Serbian cities.

An attack on the cities cannot be hidden, but in France and Germany there is a firm conviction that it can be justified. Paris and Bonn are already talking about the "destruction of the Serbian economy," which, of course, significantly surpasses the primary idea about "lifting the siege" of Sarajevo and other cities. It is almost certain that it is not the Serbian positions, but rather the Serbs themselves, that are the main issue, as Mr. Clinton himself said, either indiscreetly or on purpose. The Serbs, and not their guns, are the obsession of the Western air force that, for its part, has been called on to finish a job that it does not entirely understand. At least it does not seem to understand the time and the results that need to be accomplished before the job can be proclaimed finished. At this point, there is no longer any need to talk about injustice, lack of evidence, and marketplace necrophilia. All those who, for some reason, believe that they are experts on the matter because they have monitored its development from the beginning—providing, of course, that the beginning can be established—are persistently searching for an answer to the following question: What will the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia do? Actually, perhaps the question could be rephrased: What are they planning to do with Yugoslavia? Has not a part of the question been answered by the public spreading of euphoric hate primarily in Belgium, Germany, and France, where the borders of the bombing raid are expanding endlessly, both in terms of space and intensity.

Perhaps the Alliance does have its internal answer to the question of what it would like to accomplish, but it does not have a solution as to how to do it. For the time being, there is no talk about the openly announced, but currently frozen variant of "destroying the bridges on the Drina River," which, of course, would constitute open aggression against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. The drawers with top secret compartments that contain documents elaborating the variants of the operation for the complex national punishment of the Serbs, also contain the outline of the Serbian mother territory [maticni teritorij], as an excessively desired, but as the same time dangerous, prize. It represents the unit of measure for the Alliance's degree of disintegration and the extreme fear of its suicidal catharsis. For the time being, the Drina River represents a rather firm border, which they [NATO] would like to cross, but do not dare, because this would almost certainly ignite a big fire, the means to extinguish which have still not been found.

Maybe in this way only a part of the answer has been revealed: How far do we go? If, of course, all this depended only on those who believe that they have a monopoly on the first and last steps. However, things do not usually work in this way, because it is only possible to control a war while it is still on paper. Once it begins, its course and fate are dictated by irrational turnabouts, regardless of whether they are natural or construed. Just like the series of media suicides at the Sarajevo markets, the irrationality of which was used as evidence, which, after all, is completely logical for the concept of modern warfare.

Today, it is still not possible to say with any degree of certainty what could happen in the part of the Balkans as yet untouched by war, and what could cause it to spread. Every attempt at air strikes carries a risk of this kind, and every NATO advance toward the Drina River could be an intentional risk, a walk on the high wire of the precarious stability of the eastern Balkans. Precisely this is evidence that NATO does not understand the full implications of the ultimatum, nor the ethical symbolism of setting it. Time has started to tick to the tempo set by force, and the question "are they going to bomb us?" has again become the everyday urban uncertainty. Because the people (justifiably) believe that bombing the Serbs in Bosnia would be an unambiguous message to all Serbs, and that there is no longer any reason for fear, because the uncertainty is far worse than all the threats.

What is being awaited, what will they do, and what will we do? There are no answers, at least not of the kind that would make more sense than looking out of the window into the dark night.

Kosovo

Rugova Calls For 'International Protection'

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[Interview with Ibrahim Rugova, president of the republic of Kosovo, by Oszkar Fuzes in Washington; date not given: "We Would Like an Independent, Neutral Kosovo"]

[Text] In case of a Serbian provocation, the United States will defend the Albanians in Kosovo—U.S. President Bill Clinton assured the head of the province of Kosovo where the 90 percent Albanian inhabitants are striving for independence. Ibrahim Rugova, the democratically elected leader of the Kosovo Albanians, was among the guests at the recent prayer breakfast held by Bill Clinton. Ibrahim Rugova gave an interview to our Washington correspondent.

[Rugova] I had the opportunity to talk to President Clinton and Vice President Gore about the Kosovo issue. The U.S. position is clear: If the Serbs commit or provoke some atrocity in Kosovo, the United States will defend us. They already said that clearly one year ago. According to the United States, an explosion in Kosovo would inflame the entire region. They appreciate highly

the fact that we, the Kosovo Albanians, want to achieve our goals in a peaceful way, free of violence.

[Fuzes] Is it possible to achieve your goal, the secession of Kosovo from Serbia, without force?

[Rugova] Yes, if Kosovo is demilitarized and comes under international protection. In that case, a normal and democratic dialogue can start. I have been proposing this for quite some time but, naturally, I am aware that the implementation of this desire depends on the future of this entire stormy region. As for ourselves, we would like, first of all, a free, independent, and neutral Kosovo, one open to both Albania and Serbia. This is also a compromise from our side because, for the time being and because of Serb sensitivity, we abandon the unification of the Albanian nation. I am a realist and I know that all this also depends on a variety of major-power interests, and the decision will be made at a future international conference.

[Fuzes] At least one quarter of Macedonia's population are Albanians. What is their situation like?

[Rugova] Their situation is made more difficult by legal and constitutional problems. I would like to see to it that these problems are solved and the Albanians living there can systematically participate in the normal development of democratic Macedonia.

[Fuzes] Regarding Serbia, there is naturally a big difference between the situation of Kosovo Albanians and the situation of Vojvodina Hungarians. Nevertheless, is there any cooperation between the Albanian Democratic League of Kosova and the Democratic Union of Vojvodina Hungarians?

[Rugova] Unfortunately, the Hungarians in Vojvodina are also subjected to great pressure and, in many respects, they have to bear similar burdens. It is our principled position that the Hungarians in Vojvodina also have a right to some kind of autonomy, namely a type of autonomy they would justifiably desire. We agree on this but, under the current circumstances, we can have little genuine contact and, unfortunately, we can hardly help each other.

[Fuzes] The most timely question: Has any political solution been left at all to solve the Bosnian issue?

[Rugova] No matter how difficult it is now to envisage a political settlement of the problem, one must try because there is no other way. If Europe and the United States are unable to put an end to this war, it will inflame Southern-Eastern Europe and later, perhaps the entire continent.

[Fuzes] Only a historic rapprochement with the Serbs can bring a long-term calm. Are the Kosovo Albanians ready for this?

[Rugova] If anyone, we are really aware of the importance of a rapprochement between the two nations. We are also aware of the fact that we must work hard for this. The issue at hand is that the Serbs should now become reconciled with all their neighbors, and this requires a change in the regime in Belgrade. Moreover, this would not even be enough. Unfortunately, the Serbs have become infected by the aggressive nationalist mythology that measures the greatness of a nation in terms of acquired and "ethnically clean" territories. It will take a long time for the Serbs to rid themselves of this sickness and become disappointed with their extremist chauvinistic leaders.